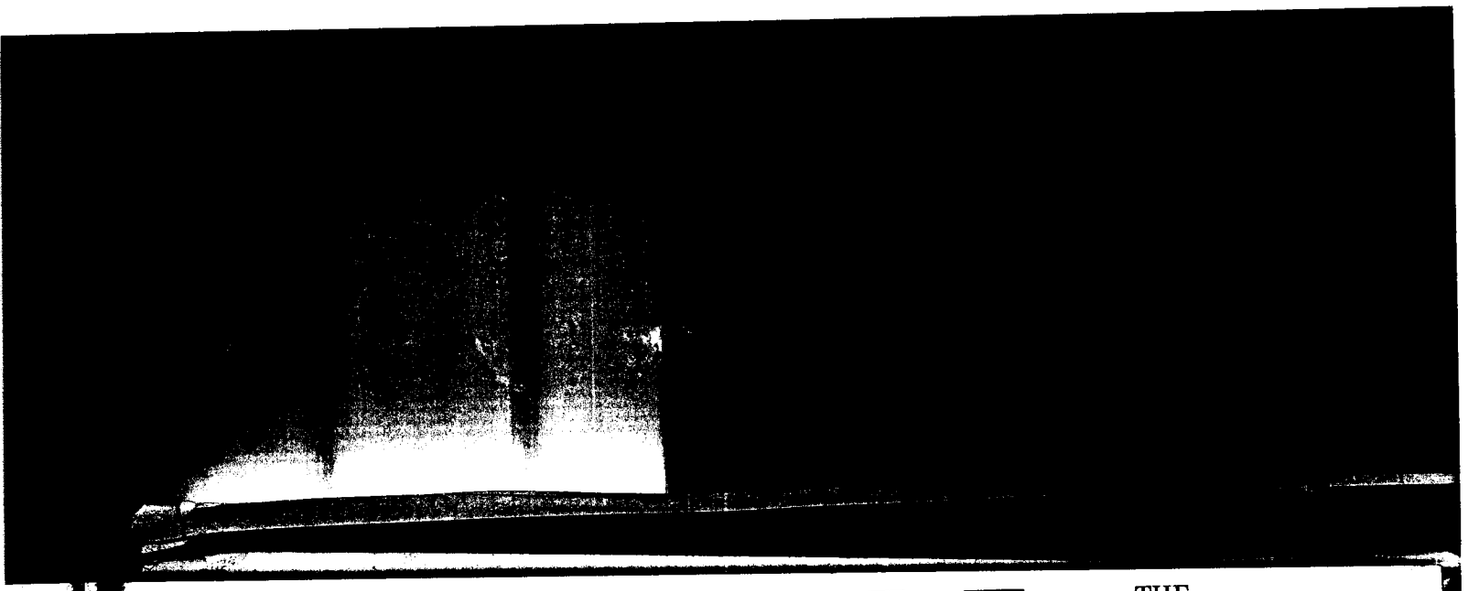

SHOW

INCORPORATING USA*1

THE
MAGAZINE
OF
THE
ARTS

75 CENTS
MAY 1963

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JAPAN: THE NEW FAR WEST

A Bunny's Tale

SHOW's First Exposé for Intelligent People

by Gloria Steinem

Earlier decades of this century had their Follies girls and their Wampus baby stars. The Sixties have Playboy Club Bunnies, called by their employers "the most envied girls in America."

What really goes on in their "glamorous and exciting world"? To find out, SHOW chose a writer who combines the hidden qualities of a Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude* graduate of Smith College with the more obvious ones of an ex-dancer and beauty queen. A few weeks ago, she started her investigations armed with a large diary and this ad:

GIRLS:
DO PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNIES REALLY HAVE GLAMOROUS JOBS, MEET CELEBRITIES, AND MAKE TOP MONEY?

Yes, it's true! Attractive young girls can now earn $200-$300 a week at the fabulous New York Playboy Club, enjoy the glamorous and exciting aura of show business, and have the opportunity to travel to other Playboy Clubs throughout the world. Whether serving drinks, snapping pictures or greeting guests at the door, the Playboy Club is the stage — the Bunnies are the stars.

The charm and beauty of our Bunnies has been extolled in Time, Newsweek and Pageant, and Ed Sullivan has called The Playboy Club "...the greatest new show biz gimmick." And the Playboy Club is now the busiest spot in New York.

If you are pretty and personable, between 21 and 24, married or single, you probably qualify. No experience necessary.

Apply in person at SPECIAL INTERVIEWS being held Saturday and Sunday, January 26-27, 10 A.M. - 3 P.M. Please bring a swimsuit or leotards.

THE PLAYBOY CLUB
5 East 59th Street PL 2-3100

Thursday 24th

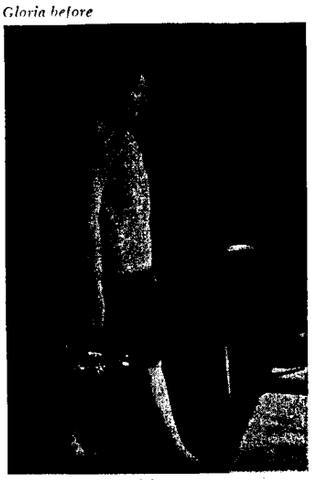
I've decided to call myself Marie Catherine Ochs. It is, may my ancestors forgive me, a family name. I have some claim to it and I'm well versed in its European origins. Besides, it sounds much too square to be phony.

Friday 25th

I've spent the entire afternoon making up a background for Marie. She shares my apartment, my phone and my measurements. Though younger than I by four years, Marie celebrates the same birthday and went to the same high school and college. But she wasn't a slave to academics—not Marie. After one year she left me plodding along the path to a B.A. and boarded a tourist flight to Europe. She had no money, but short periods as a waitress in London, a hostess-dancer in Paris and a secretary in Geneva were enough to sustain her between beachcombing and other escapades. Last year, she came back to New York and worked briefly as a secretary in a small educational foundation of which I am a director. I shall be happy to give her a good reference. Three mutual friends have agreed to give her strong personal recommendations. To know her is to love her.

Tomorrow is the day. Marie makes her first trip out of this notebook and into the world. I'm off to buy a leotard.

Gloria before



Who says a Smith girl . . .

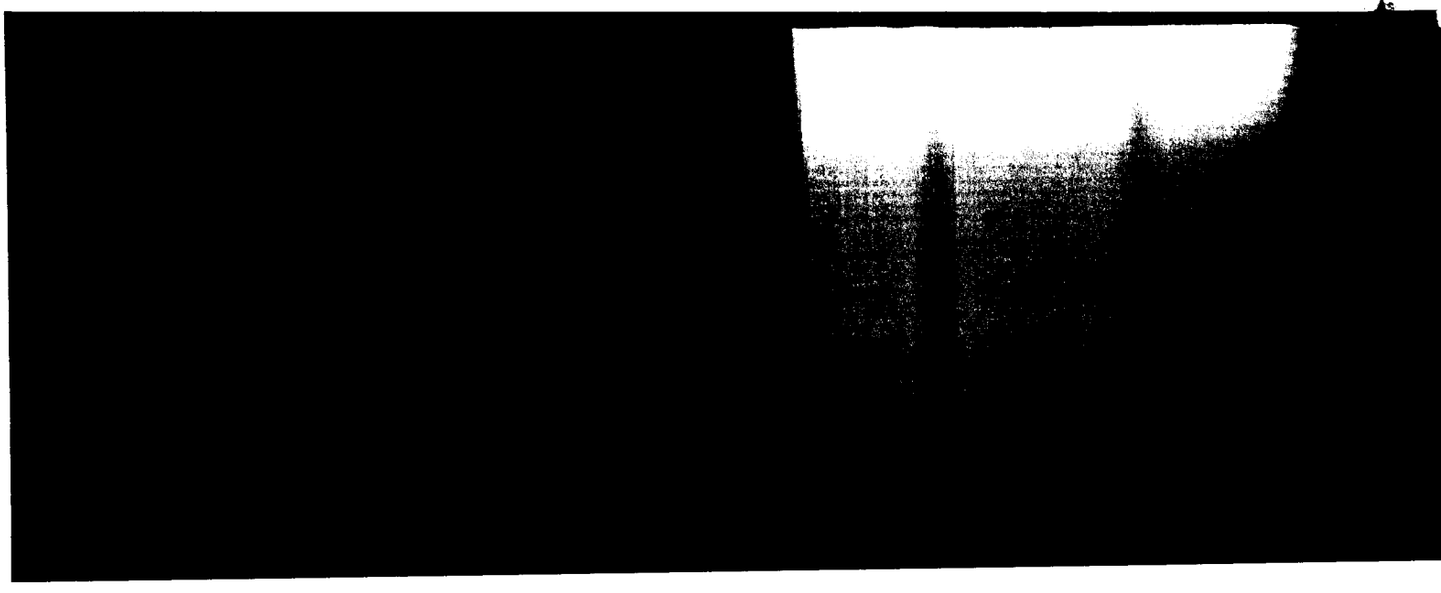
Saturday 26th

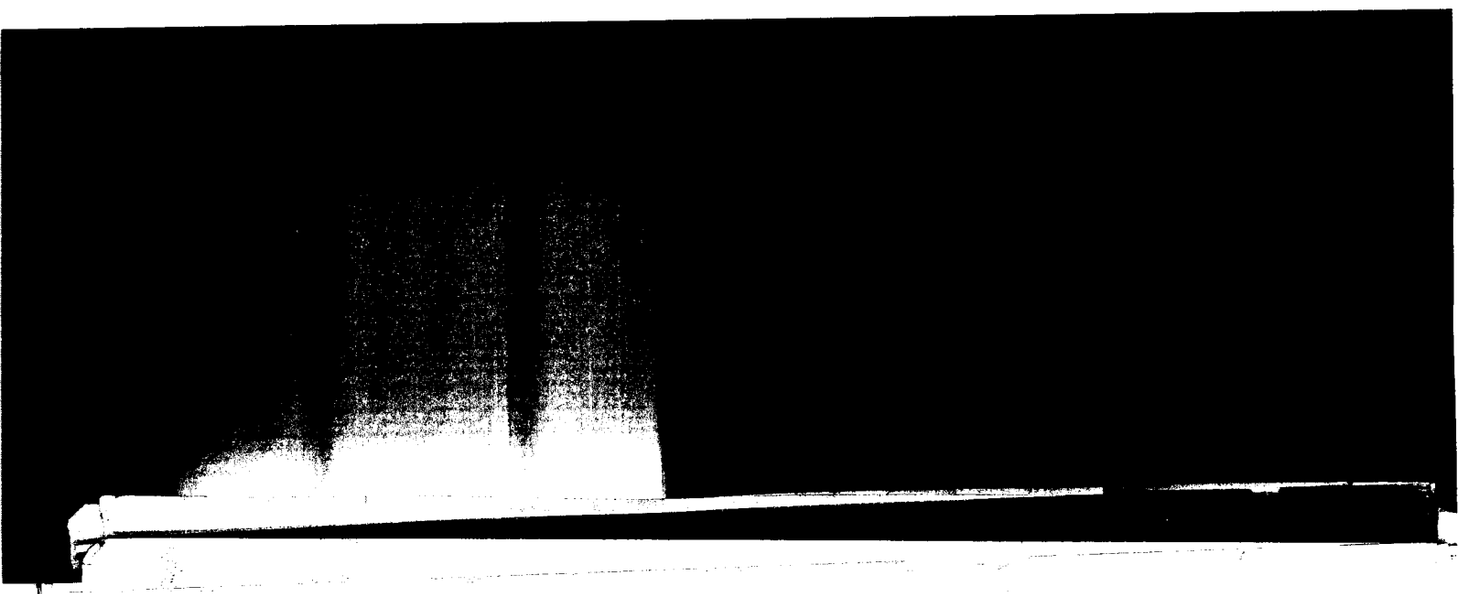
Today I put on the most theatrical clothes I could find, packed my leotard in a hatbox and walked to the Playboy Club. It is impossible to miss. The discreet, six-story office building and art gallery that once stood there has been completely gutted and transformed into a shiny rectangle of plate glass. White canopies emblazoned with black Bunny symbols jut out over the sidewalk. Stairways lead to entrances on either side and are connected by an outdoor platform which is on a level with the orange-carpeted interior clearly visible through the glass. At dead center of that interior, a modern floating stairway spirals upward toward the second level. The total effect is cheerful and startling.

I crossed over to the Club, where a middle-aged man in a private guard's uniform grinned and beckoned. "Here bunny, bunny, bunny!" he said, and jerked his thumb toward the glass door on the left. "Interviews downstairs in the Playmate Bar."

The inside of the Club was so theatrically lit that it took a few seconds to realize it was closed and empty. I walked down a short flight of stairs and was greeted by Miss Shay, a thin, thirtyish woman, who sat at a desk in the darkened bar. "Bunny?" she asked briskly. "Sit over there, fill out this form and take off your coat." I could see that two of the tables were already occupied by girls hunched over pencils, and I looked at them curiously. I had come in the middle of the interviews, hoping to see as many applicants as I could, but there were only three. "*Take off your coat,*" said Miss Shay again, and looked at me appraisingly while I did so. One of the girls got up and crossed to the desk, her high-heeled plastic sandals slapping smartly against her heels. "Look," she said, "you want these measurements with or without a bra?" "With," said Miss Shay. "But I'm bigger without," said the girl. "All right," said Miss Shay wearily, "without." Two more girls came down the steps looking fresh and innocent of cosmetics. "Bunny?" said Miss Shay. "Not really," said one, but the other took a card. Their long hair and loafers looked collegiate.

The application form was short: address, phone, measurements, age and last three employers. I finished it and began to stall for time by looking at an accompanying brochure entitled BE A PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNY! Most of it was devoted to photographs: a group picture showed Bunnies "chosen from all over the United States" surrounding "Playboy Club President and PLAYBOY Editor-Publisher Hugh M. Hefner"; there was a close-up of a Bunny serving Tony Curtis, "a Playboy Club devotee [who] will soon star in Hugh M. Hefner's film story titled, appropriately enough, *Playboy*"; in another, two Bunnies smiled with Hugh M. Hefner on "Playboy's nationally syndicated





television show"; Bunnies handed out copies of *Playboy* in a veterans' hospital as "just one of the many worthwhile community projects in which Bunnies participate"; a blonde Bunny stood before a matronly woman, the "Bunny Mother," who offered "friendly personal counseling"; and, on the last page, a bikini-clad girl crouched on a yacht flying a Bunny flag. "When you become a Bunny," said the text, "your world will be fun-filled, pleasant and always exciting . . ."It cited an average salary of $200 a week.

Another girl came down the steps. She wore glasses with blue rims and a coat that looked as if she had outgrown it. I watched her as she nervously asked Miss Shay if the Club hired 18-year-olds. "Sure," said Miss Shay, "but they can't work the midnight shift." She gave the girl an application card, glanced down at her plump legs and did not ask her to take off her coat. Two more girls came in, one in bright pink stretch pants and the other in purple. "Man, this place is a gas," said pink. "You think this is wild, you should see Hefner's house in Chicago," said purple. Miss Shay looked at them with approval. "I don't have a phone," said blue glasses sadly. "Is it all right if I give you my uncle's phone? He lives in Brooklyn, too." "You do that," said Miss Shay, and called me over. She pointed to a spot three feet in front of her desk and told me to stand up straight. I stood. "I want to be a Bunny so much," said blue glasses. "I read about it in a magazine at school." Miss Shay asked me if I were really 24. "That's awfully old," she warned. I said I thought I might just get in under the wire. She nodded. "My uncle isn't home all day," the girl said, "but I'll go to his house and stay by the phone." "You do that, dear," said Miss Shay and, turning to me, "I've taken the liberty of making an appointment for you on Wednesday at 6:30. You will come to the service entrance, go to the sixth floor and ask for Miss Burgess, the Bunny Mother." I agreed, but then she added, "Are you sure you haven't applied before? Someone named Marie Ochs came in yesterday." I was startled: could Marie have escaped from my notebook? I had a 30-second fantasy based on Pygmalion. Or was there another Marie Ochs? Possible, but not likely. I decided to brave it out. "How strange," I murmured, "there must be some mistake." Miss Shay shrugged and suggested I bring "bathing suit or leotard" on Wednesday. "Could I call you?" said blue glasses. "Don't do that, dear," said Miss Shay, "*we'll* call *you*."

I left the Club worrying about the life expectancy of Marie Ochs. Would they find out? Or did they know already? When I got halfway up the block I saw the two college girls. They were leaning against a building, their arms wrapped around themselves in a spasm of giggles and, suddenly, I felt better about everything.

Everything, perhaps, except the thought of blue glasses sitting by her uncle's phone in Brooklyn.

Wednesday 30th

I arrived at the Club promptly at 6:30, and business appeared to be booming. Customers were lined up in the snow to get in, and several passers-by were standing on the outdoor platform, their faces pressed to the glass. The elevator boy, a Valentino-handsome Puerto Rican, cheerfully jammed me in his car with two uniformed Negro porters, five middle-aged male customers, two costumed Bunnies and a stout matron in a mink coat. We stopped at the sixth floor. "Is this where I get out?" said the matron. "Sure, darling," drawled the elevator boy, "if you want to be a *Bunny*." Laughter.

I looked around me. Dim lights and soft carpets had given way to unpainted cement block and hanging light bulbs. There was a door marked "—unnies," but I could see the outlines where the letter B had been. A sign, handwritten on a piece of torn cardboard, was taped underneath: "KNOCK!! Come on, guys. Please cooperate?!!" I walked through the door and into a bright, crowded hallway.

Two girls brushed past me. One was wearing nothing but bikini-style panties; the other had on long black tights of fine mesh and lavender satin high heels. They both rushed to a small wardrobe room on my right, yelled out their names, collected costumes and rushed back. I asked the wardrobe mistress for Miss Burgess. "Honey, we just gave her a going-away present." Four more girls bounced up to ask for costumes, collars, cuffs and tails. They had on tights and high heels but nothing from the waist up. One stopped to study a bulletin board list titled "Bunny of the Week."

I retreated to the other end of the tiny hall. It opened into a large dressing room filled with metal lockers and long rows of dressing tables. Personal notes were taped to the mirrors ("Anybody want to work B Level Saturday night?" and "I'm having a swingin' party Wednesday at Washington Square Village, all Bunnies welcome . . ."), cosmetics were strewn along the counters and three girls sat in a row applying false eyelashes with the concentration of yogis. It looked like a cartoon of a chorus girls' dressing room.

A girl with very red hair, very white skin and a black satin Bunny costume turned her back to me and waited. I understood that I was supposed to zip her up, a task that took several minutes of pulling and tugging. She was a big girl and looked a little tough, but her voice when she thanked me was a tiny, baby voice. Judy Holliday could not have done better. I asked about

Marie after

. . . has to be dull?

SHOW: MAY 1963

Miss Burgess. "Yeah, she's in that office," said baby voice, gesturing toward a wooden door with a glass peephole in it, "but Sheralee's the new Bunny Mother." Through the glass, I could see two girls, a blonde and a brunette. Both appeared to be in their early twenties and nothing like the matronly woman pictured in the brochure. Baby voice tugged and pulled some more. "This isn't my costume," she explained, "and I can't get the crotch up." She walked away, snapping her fingers and humming softly.

The brunette came out of the office and introduced herself to me as Bunny Mother Sheralee. I told her I had mistaken her for a Bunny. "I worked as a Bunny when the Club opened last month," she said, "but now I've replaced Miss Burgess." She nodded toward the blonde who was trying on a three-piece beige suit that I took to be her going-away present. "You'll have to wait a while, honey," said Sheralee. I sat down.

By 7:00, I had watched three girls tease their hair into cotton candy shapes and four more stuff their bosoms with Kleenex. By 7:15, I had talked to two other prospective Bunnies, one a dancer, the other a part-time model from Texas. At 7:30, I witnessed the major crisis of a Bunny who had sent her costume to the cleaners with her engagement ring pinned inside. At 7:40, Miss Shay went into the office and said, "There's no one left but Marie." By 8:00, I was sure that she was waiting for the manager of the Club to come tell me my real identity had been discovered. By 8:15, when I was finally called in, I was nervous beyond all proportion.

I waited while Sheralee looked over my application. "You don't look 24," she said. Well, that's that, I thought. "You look much younger." I smiled in disbelief. She took several Polaroid pictures of me. "For the record," she explained. I offered her the personal history I had so painstakingly fabricated and typed, but she gave it back with hardly a glance. "We don't like our girls to have any background," she said firmly, "we just want you to fit the Bunny Image." She directed me to the costume room. Should I put on my leotard? "Don't bother with that," said Sheralee, "we just want to see that Bunny Image." The wardrobe mistress told me to take off my clothes and began to search for an old Bunny costume in my size. A girl rushed in with her costume in her hand, calling for the wardrobe mistress as a wounded soldier might yell, "Medic!" "I've broken my zipper," she wailed, "I sneezed!" "That's the third time this week," said the wardrobe mistress sternly. "It's a regular epidemic." The girl apologized, found another costume and left. Could a sneeze really break a costume? "Sure," she said. "Girls with colds usually have to be replaced."

She gave me a bright blue satin. It was so tight that the zipper caught my skin as she fastened the back. She told me to inhale as she zipped again, this time without mishap, and stood back to look at me critically. The bottom was cut up so high that it left my hip bones exposed as well as a good five inches of untanned derrière. The boning in the waist would have made Scarlett O'Hara blanch, and the entire construction tended to push all available flesh up to the bosom. I was sure it would be perilous to bend over. "Not too bad," said the wardrobe mistress, and began to stuff an entire plastic dry cleaning bag into the top of my costume. A blue satin band with matching Bunny ears attached was fitted around my head like an enlarged bicycle clip, and a grapefruit-sized hemisphere of white fluff was attached to hooks at the costume's rear-most point. "Okay, baby," she said, "put on your high heels and go show Sheralee." I looked in the mirror. The Bunny Image looked back.

"Oh, you look *sweet,*" said Sheralee. "Stand against the wall and smile pretty for the birdie." She took several more Polaroid shots. The baby-voiced redhead came in to say she still hadn't found a costume to fit. A tiny blonde in lavender satin took off her tail and perched on the desk. "Look," she said, "I don't mind the demerits, okay I got five demerits, but don't I get points for working overtime?" Sheralee looked harassed and turned to Miss Burgess. "The new kids think the girls from Chicago get special treatment and the old kids won't train the new ones." "I'll train the little buggers," said baby voice. "Just get me a costume."

I got dressed and waited. And listened:

"...he gave me 30 bucks and I only got him cigarettes."

"Bend over, honey, and get yourself into it."

"I don't know, he makes Milk of Magnesia or something."

"You know people commit *suicide* with these plastic bags?"

"Then this shmuck orders a Lace Curtain. Who ever heard of a Lace Curtain?"

"I told him our tails were asbestos, so he tried to burn it to find out."

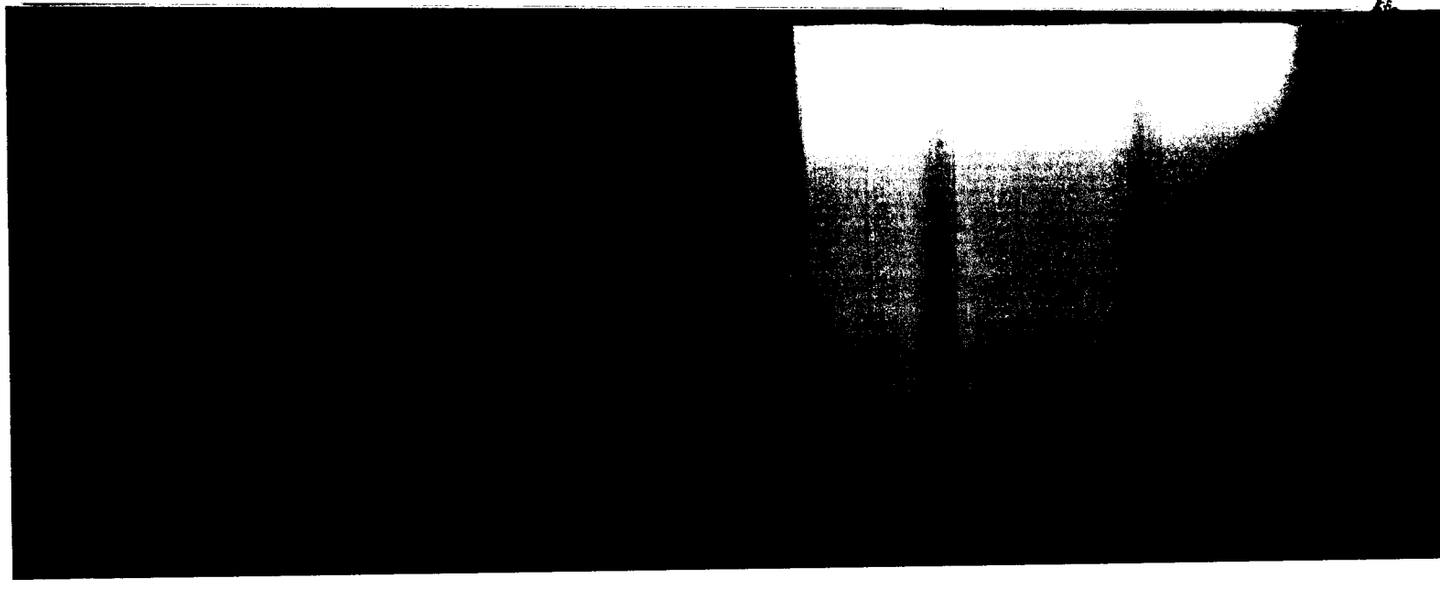
"Last week I netted 30 bucks in tips. Big deal."

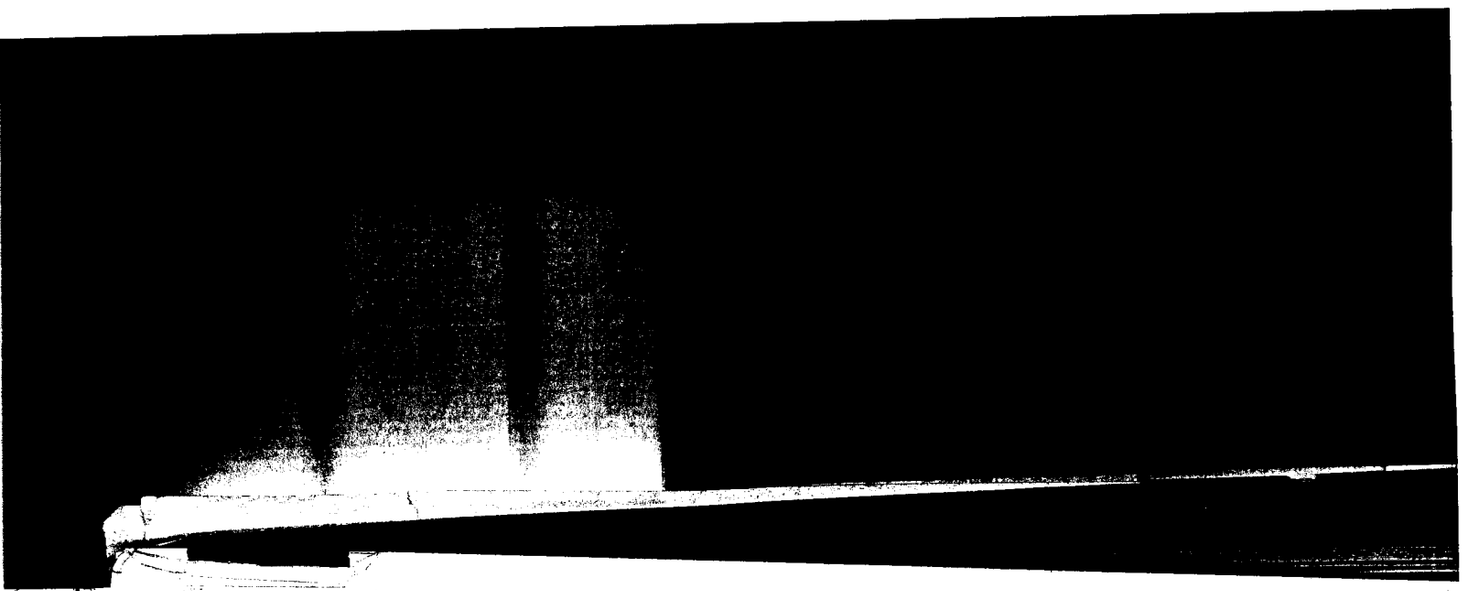
Sheralee called me back into the office. "So you want to be a Bunny," she said. Oh yes, very much, I said. "Well...," she paused significantly, "we want you to be!" I was startled. No more interviews? No investigation? "Come in tomorrow at three. We'll fit your costume and have you sign everything." I smiled and felt foolishly elated.

Down the stairs and up Fifth Avenue. Hippety-hop, I'm a Bunny!

Thursday 31st

I now have two Bunny costumes, one orange satin and one electric blue: the color choice and the quality of satin are about the same as those available in athletic-supply catalogues. Costume bodies, pre-cut to body and bra-cup size, are fitted while-you-wait. I waited, standing on the cement floor in bare feet and bikini pants. The wardrobe mistress gave me a small bathroom rug to stand on. "Can't have brand new Bunnies catching cold," she said. I asked if she could follow the line of the pants in fitting the bottom; the costume I had tried the day before was cut up higher than any I had seen in photographs, much higher than a bikini. She chuckled. "Listen, baby, you think that was high you should see *some.*" The whole costume was darted and seamed until it was two inches smaller than any of my measurements everywhere except the bust. "You got to have room in there to stuff," she said. "Just about everybody stuffs.





And you keep your tips in there. 'The Vault' they call it."

A girl with jet black hair, chalky makeup and a green costume stopped at the door. "My tail droops," she said, pushing it into position with one finger, "those damn customers always yank it." The wardrobe mistress handed her a safety pin. "You better get a cleaner tail too, baby. You get demerits running around with a scruffy old tail like that." More girls began calling for their costumes, checking them out in a notebook chained to the counter. I learned that they were not allowed to take their costumes out of the building and that each girl was supposed to pay $2.50 a day to cover the cost of her costume's upkeep and cleaning. Bunnies also paid $5 a pair for their thin black nylon tights and could be given demerits if they wore tights with runs in them. The wardrobe mistress gave me swatches from my two costumes and told me to have shoes dyed to match. I asked if the Club allowed us any money for shoes. "You crazy or something, baby?" she said. "This place don't allow you no money for nothing. Make sure you get three-inch heels. You get demerits, you wear 'em any lower."

I dressed and went to the Bunny Mother's room. Sheralee was at the desk, her long hair pinned back and looking about 18. She gave me a large, shocking-pink form marked "Bunny Application" and a brown plastic briefcase with a miniature nude girl and "The Playboy Club" painted on it in orange. "This is your Bunny Bible," she said seriously, "and I want you to promise me you'll study it all weekend."

The application form was four pages long. I had already made up most of the answers for my biography, but some questions were new. Was I dating any Playboy Club keyholders and what were their names? None. Did I plan to date a particular keyholder? No. Did I have a police record? No. The space for a Social Security number I left blank.

Up one flight in the main office, I delivered the form to Miss Shay. The cement-floored room was checkered with desks, but, as Personnel Director, Miss Shay rated a corner position. She scanned the form and began taking more Polaroid pictures of me. "Be sure and bring your Social Security card tomorrow," she said, and I wondered what to do about the fact that Marie Ochs had none. A stout man in a blue suit, black shirt and white tie approached and gestured toward a chubby girl standing behind him. "Mr. Roma told me to bring her over, and I'd sure appreciate anything you can do for her," he said, and winked. "In cases of extreme personal recommendation," said Miss Shay coolly, "we do schedule a girl's interview right away." She signaled to Sheralee, who took the girl downstairs. The stout man looked relieved. A red-haired woman and two men came over, but Miss Shay asked them to wait. The younger man tapped the redhead's chin with his fist and grinned. "You ain't got a thing to worry about, baby." She gave him a look of utter scorn and lit a cigarette.

I signed an income tax form, a meal ticket, a receipt for the meal ticket, an application form, an insurance form and a release of all photographs for any purpose—publicity, editorial or otherwise—deemed fit by Playboy Clubs International. A harried-looking young man in shirtsleeves came to tell Miss Shay that two men working in the basement were going to quit. They had expected to work six days for $75 and were working only five days for $60. They were upset about it because they had families to support. "I can't make changes," she said crisply, "I can only implement Mr. Roma's decisions."

Miss Shay stapled a set of Polaroid pictures to my employment form and gave me my schedule. "Tomorrow, you'll have make-up guidance at Larry Mathews', this weekend is Bunny Bible study and Monday I've made an appointment for you to see our doctor for a physical exam." She leaned forward confidentially. "A *complete* physical," she said. "Monday afternoon is the Bunny Mother Lecture and Bunny Father Lecture. Tuesday you'll have Bunny School, and Wednesday you'll train on the floor." I asked if I could go to my own doctor. "No," she said, "you must go to our doctor for a special physical. All Bunnies have to."

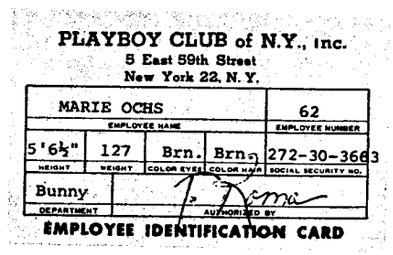
Miss Shay gave me one last form to sign, a request that Marie Ochs's birth record be sent to the Playboy Club. I signed it, hoping that the State of Michigan would take a while to discover that I did not exist. "In the meantime, I'll need your birth certificate," she said. "We can't let you work without it." I agreed to send a special delivery letter home for it.

Of course I won't be allowed to serve liquor or work late hours without proof of age. Why didn't I think of that?

Well, Marie's future may be short, but she can still try to make it through Bunny School.

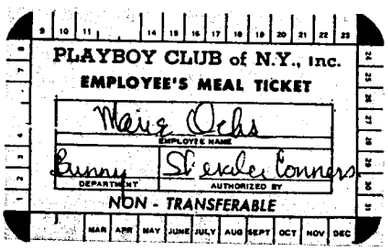
Friday 1st

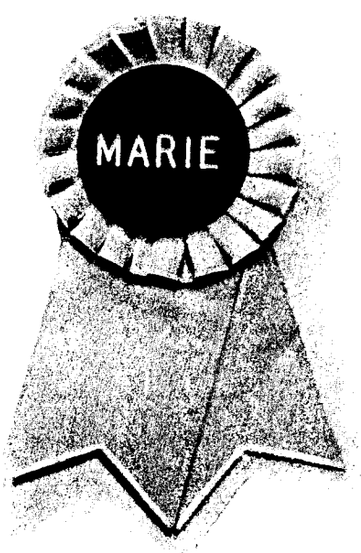
I was fitted for false eyelashes today at Larry Mathews', a 24-hour-a-day beauty salon in a West Side hotel. As she feathered the eyelashes with a manicure scissors, my makeup expert pointed out a girl who had just been fired from the Club "because she wouldn't go out with a Number One keyholder." But aren't we forbidden to go out with customers? "You can go out with them if they've got Number One keys," the beauty shop girl explained. "They're for Club management and reporters and big shots like that." But to be fired for *not* going out. . . . "Well," she said *(Continued on page 114)*


PLAYBOY CLUB of N.Y., Inc.
5 East 59th Street
New York 22, N.Y.

MARIE OCHS (EMPLOYEE NAME)				62 (EMPLOYEE NUMBER)
5'6½" (HEIGHT)	127 (WEIGHT)	Brn. (COLOR EYES)	Brn. (COLOR HAIR)	272-30-3663 (SOCIAL SECURITY NO.)
Bunny (DEPARTMENT)		T. Roma (AUTHORIZED BY)		

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION CARD


PLAYBOY CLUB of N.Y., Inc.
EMPLOYEE'S MEAL TICKET
Marie Ochs (EMPLOYEE NAME)
Bunny (DEPARTMENT) Sheralee Connors (AUTHORIZED BY)
NON - TRANSFERABLE
MAR APR MAY JUNE JULY AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC



A BUNNY'S TALE

(Continued from page 93)

thoughtfully. "I guess it was the way she said it. She told him to go screw himself."

I paid the bill, $8.14 for the eyelashes and a cake of rouge even after the 25 percent Bunny Discount. I had refused to invest in darker lipstick, though "girls get fired for looking pale." I wondered how much the Bunny beauty concession was worth to Mr. Mathews. Had beauty salons sent in sealed bids for this lucrative business?

I am home now and have measured the lashes. Maybe I don't have to worry so much about being recognized in the Club. They are three quarters of an inch long at their shortest point.

Sunday 3rd

I've spent an informative Sunday with the Bunny Bible, or the PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNY MANUAL as it is officially called. From introduction ("You are holding the top job in the country for a young girl") to appendix ("Sidecar—Rim glass with lime and frost with sugar"), it is a model of clarity.

Some dozen supplements accompany the Bible. Altogether, they give a vivid picture of a Bunny's function. For instance:

"...You...are the only direct contact most of the readers will ever have with *Playboy* personnel...we depend on our Bunnies to express the personality of the magazine...."

"...Bunnies will be expected to contribute a fair share of personal appearances as part of their regular duties for the Club."

"...Bunnies are reminded that there are many pleasing means they can employ to stimulate the Club's liquor volume, thereby increasing their earnings significantly...The key to selling more drinks is *Customer Contact*...they will respond particularly to your efforts to be friendly...You should make it seem that [the customer's] opinions are very important..."

"The Incentive System is a method devised to reward those Table Bunnies who put forth an extra effort...The Bunny whose [drink] average per person is highest, will be the winner...prize money...will likewise be determined by over-all drink income."

There is a problem in being "friendly" and "pampering" the customer while refusing to go out with him or even give him your last name. The Manual makes it abundantly clear that Bunnies must never go out with anyone met in the Club, customer or employee, and adds that a detective agency called Willmark Service Systems, Inc., has been employed to make sure that they don't. ("Of course, you can never tell when you are being checked out by a Willmark Service representative.") The explanation written for the Bunnies is simple: "Men are very excited about being in the company of Elizabeth Taylor, but they know they can't paw or proposition her. The moment they felt they could become familiar with her, she would not have the aura of glamor that now surrounds her. The same must be true of our Bunnies." In an accompanying letter from Hugh Hefner to Willmark, the explanation is still simpler: "Our licenses are laid on the line any time any of our employees in any way engages, aids, or abets traffic in prostitution..." Willmark is therefore instructed to "Use your most attractive and personable male representatives to proposition the Bunnies, and even offer...as high as $200 on this, 'right now' for a promise of meeting you outside the Club later." Willmark representatives are told to ask a barman or other male employee "if any of the girls are available on a cash basis for a 'friendly evening.'...Tell him you will pay the girls well or will pay him for the girls." If the employee does act "as a procurer," Willmark is to notify the Club immediately. "We naturally do not tolerate any merchandising of the Bunnies," writes Mr. Hefner, "and are most anxious to know if any such thing is occurring."

If the idea of being merchandised isn't enough to unnerve a prospective Bunny, there are other directives that may. Willmark representatives are to check girls for medium heels, runs in their hose, jewelry, underwear that shows, crooked or unmatched ears, dirty costumes, absence of name tags and "tails in good order." Further: "When a show is on, check to see if the Bunnies are reacting to the performers. When a comic is on, they are supposed to laugh." Big Brother Willmark.

In fact, Bunnies must *always* appear gay and cheerful ("...think about something happy or funny...your most important commodity is personality") in spite of all worries, including the Demerit System. Messy hair, bad nails and bad makeup cost five demerits each. So does calling the Room Director by his first name, failing to keep a makeup appointment or eating food in the Bunny Room. Chewing gum or eating while on duty is ten demerits for the first offense, 20 for the second and dismissal for the third. A three-time loser for "failure to report for work without replacement" is not only dismissed but blacklisted from all other Playboy Clubs. Showing up late for work or after a break costs a demerit a minute, failure to follow a Room Director's instructions costs 15. "The dollar value of demerits," notes the Bunny Bible, "shall be determined by the General Manager of each Club."

Once the system is mastered, there are still instructions for specific jobs. Door Bunnies greet customers and check their keys. Camera Bunnies must operate Polaroids, Cigarette Bunnies explain why a pack of cigarettes can't be bought without a Playboy lighter, Hat Check Bunnies learn the system, Gift Shop Bunnies sell Playboy products, Mobile Gift Shop Bunnies carry Playboy products around in baskets and Table Bunnies memorize 13 pages of drinks.

There's more to Bunnyhood than stuffing bosoms.

Note: Section 523 says: "Employees may enter and enjoy the facilities of the Club as bona fide guests of #1 Keyholders." Are these the big shots my Larry Mathews friend had in mind?

Morning, Monday 4th

At 11 A.M. I went to see the Playboy doctor ("Failure to keep doctor's appointment, 20 demerits") at his office in a nearby hotel. The nurse gave me a medical history form to fill out. "Do you know this includes an internal physical? I've been trying to get Miss Shay to warn the girls." I said I knew, but that I didn't understand why it was required. "It's for your own good," she said, and led me into a narrow examining room containing a medicine chest, a scales, and a gynecological table. I put on a hospital robe and waited. It seemed I had spent a good deal of time lately either taking off clothes, waiting, or both.

The nurse came back with the doctor, a stout, 60-ish man with the pink and white skin of a baby. "So you're going to be a Bunny," he said heartily. "Just came back from Miami myself. Beautiful Club down there. Beautiful Bunnies." I started to ask him if he had the coast-to-coast Bunny franchise, but he interrupted to ask how I liked Bunnyhood. Well, it's livelier than being a secretary, I said, and he told me to sit on the edge of the table. As he pounded my back and listened to me breathe, the thought crossed my mind that every Bunny in the New York Club had rested on the same spot. "This is the part all the girls hate," said the doctor, and took blood from my arm for a Wassermann test. I told him that testing for venereal disease seemed a little ominous. "Don't be silly," he said, "all the employees have to do it. You'll know everyone in the Club is clean." I said that their being clean didn't really affect me and that I objected to being put through these tests. Silence. He asked me to stand to "see if your legs are straight." Okay, I said, I have to have a Wassermann. But what about an internal examination? Is that required of waitresses in New York State? "What do you care?" he said. "It's free and it's for everybody's good." How? I asked. "Look," he said impatiently, "we usually find that girls who object to it strenuously have some reason..." He paused significantly. I paused, too. I could either go through with it, or I could march out in protest. But in protest of what?

Back in the reception room, the nurse gave me a note to show Miss Shay that I had, according to preliminary tests at least, passed. As I put on my coat, she phoned a laboratory to pick up "a blood sample and a smear." I asked why those tests and no urine sample? Wasn't that the most common laboratory test of all? "It's for your own protection," she said, firmly, "and anyway, the Club pays."

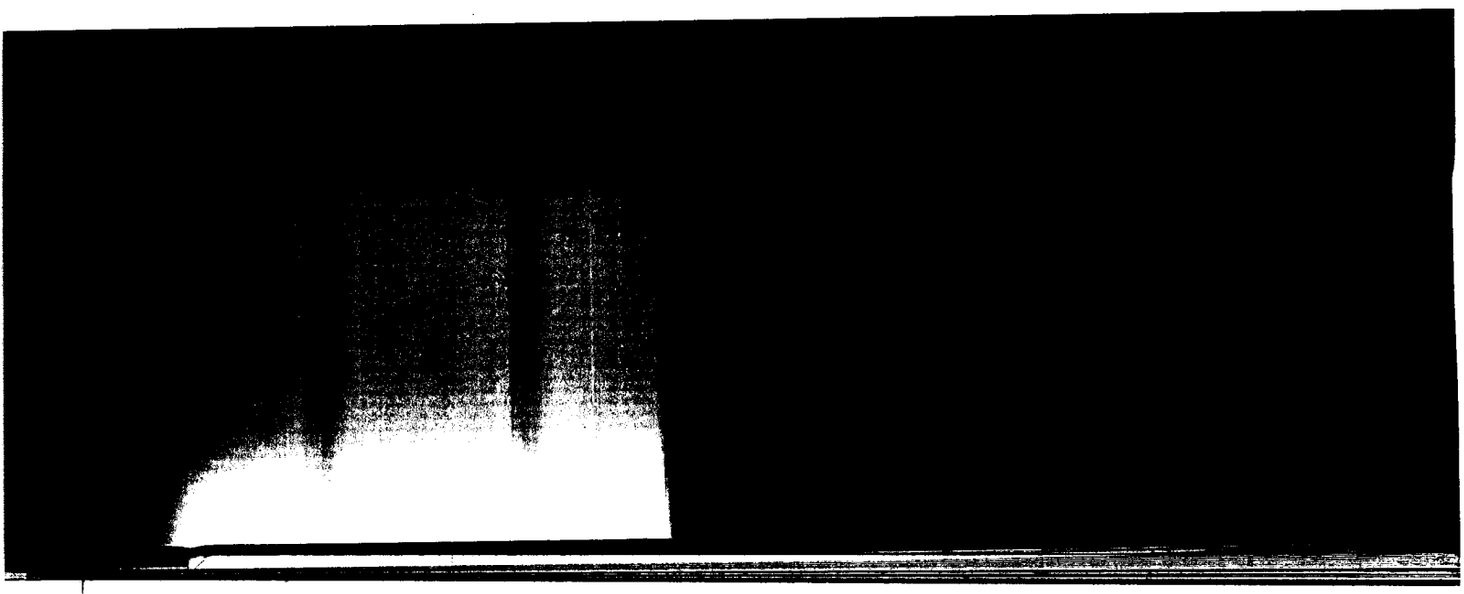
Down in the lobby, I stopped in a telephone booth to call the Board of Health. Was a Wassermann Test required of waitresses in New York City? "No." What kind of physical examination *was* required? "None at all," they said.

Afternoon, Monday 4th

The Bunny Mother Lecture turned out to be a casual and much-interrupted talk with Sheralee in her small windowless office. There were seven other trainees, two of them already in costume. There was also a delicate blonde, the part-time model from Texas whom I had already met, a very big girl with very long hair who said she was a magician's assistant, a square-looking girl in a plaid suit and a pretty brunette who never took her coat off.

For the most part, Sheralee's talk repeated the Bunny Bible, but some points were new:

1. Because of the minimum wage in New York City, we must get a salary of $50 a week. We get tips, but the Club takes 50 percent of the first $30 worth of those that are charged, 25 percent of amounts up to $60 and 5 percent after that. "That means half of everything," whispered a girl in costume. "Who gets more than $30 a day?"
2. We may keep all tips that are given to us in cash, but if we indicate any preference for cash tips we will be fired.
3. "We don't even want you kids to know what 'Drink Average' means," said Sheralee, and explained that it meant the number of drinks per customer. "But if you give good service, you're bound to get more reorders, and you get merits for good service. A hundred merits equal $25."
4. If we meet boyfriends or husbands after work, we must do it at least two blocks from the Club. Customers must never see us meeting other men.
5. We should never leave money in our lockers. Two girls have just been fired for stealing.
6. Because of "special problems in New York," we can't be charged money for demerits, so we may buy them back with merits. If a hundred merits are worth $25, isn't it the same thing? "No," said Sheralee.
7. Number One Keyholders are given special treatment; i.e., we bring them telephone, pad and pen immediately. Playboy International then "absorbs" the amount of their bills. Number One Keys go to the executives of all the Clubs, important members of the press and a few other VIPs. We may also give them our names, accompany them in the Club and go out with them. The magician's assistant asked if we *had* to go out with them. Sheralee said, "Of course not." "But," she said, "one of the Room Directors got mad at me for not telling my last name to a Number One Keyholder. I explained that I was married, but he said I should give my last name anyway." Sheralee said she was sure the Room Director didn't mean it. "You never have to do anything you don't want," she said comfortingly.
8. The apartment of Vic Lownes is used for *Playboy*'s promotional parties in New York just as Hugh Hefner's house is used in Chicago. ("Mr. Lownes used to run the Clubs," Sheralee explained, "but now he's associated mostly with the magazine.") When we go to such parties, we are not allowed to bring



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men. "Not even husbands?" the magician's assistant asked. "Absolutely *no men*," said Sheralee. "But of course you don't have to go if you don't want to."

We all went down to the VIP Room for the Bunny Father Lecture, but not before a Bunny stopped at the door of Sheralee's office and called "Gloria!" I froze. After what seemed an eternity, the Bunny sitting next to me answered. It was her name, too. I have learned to answer to Marie. Now I must stop answering to Gloria.

There was no Bunny Father, but two slide shows with taped narration and jazz background were presented as his lecture. One was on Bunnies in general and offered nothing new except that when customers tried to "get familiar," we were to say, "Sir, you are not allowed to touch the Bunnies." The second half of the Bunny Father Lecture was called "The Cocktail Bunny" and showed how to set up trays, fill out checks and place drinks on tables. The narration didn't synchronize with the slides, the room was cold and I emerged with a splitting headache.

Sheralee said that Miss Shay wanted to see me. My heart sank.

The main office was the same fluorescent-lit chaos as before, but Miss Shay was an island of calm. I would need an identification card, she said, to get in and out of the building. I gave her the note from the doctor, and my real Social Security number. I explained that I had lost the card. She looked doubtful but took the number.

I wanted to ask about this morning's medical puzzle, but decided against it for the moment. By calling attention to myself, I might only jog her memory about the missing birth certificate. I told her that my file was complete except for a chest X ray, and I left. It's hard to believe that the efficient Miss Shay won't catch up with me soon, but I'll stay until discovered.

Tuesday 5th

At noon today, I waited in line for a free chest X ray at the Department of Health, muttering "Flamingo gets cherry, orange and lime circle, Mist gets lemon twist, cordials go in London Docks" under my breath. These bits of wisdom from my Drink Script and all the other documents in that brown plastic envelope were to be the subject of a written Bunny Quiz at 3:00.

I reported to Sheralee and she greeted me with a rush. "Oh sweetie, I'm absolutely *desperate!*" She needed an "over-21 girl," she said, to work the hat check concession from 7:30 that evening to four in the morning. Would I help her out? Of course I would, I said, if she thought I could handle it. "Oh sure, sweetie," said Sheralee, "it's terrifically simple." My matching shoes weren't ready yet, but never mind, I could wear black, she said. All I had to do was to be there in makeup by seven. I was surprised and elated. I would have at least one night "on the floor" after all. I would, that is, if I could successfully avoid Miss Shay.

The quiz turned out to be a list of 61 short-answer questions. Our class of eight scribbled seriously while Sheralee read the questions aloud. I could see the Texas model looking perplexed, her mouth slightly open, and the Bunny named Gloria was chewing on her knuckle. I decided it wouldn't pay to be too smart, and wrote down six wrong answers. We scored each others' papers and read out the results. I was top of the class with nine wrong, the magician's assistant had ten, and everyone else missed 14 or more, Texas nearly 30. When the Club says a Bunny is chosen for "1) *Beauty*, 2) *Personality* and 3) *Ability*," the order must be significant.

We went to the Penthouse, a large fourth-floor room with a back-lit plastic panel depicting roof tops. Sheralee seated us at a row of deserted tables and began to quiz us on drinks. What is Fleischmann's? "Gin." What is Cutty Sark? Two girls didn't know, but the third triumphantly said "Scotch." What is Vat 69? "I haven't studied these," said Texas. "Scotch," said the pretty brunette. What's Courvoisier? "Ooo, I know, I memorized that. It's . . . cognac!" said Gloria. What's Piper Heidsieck? The delicate blonde didn't know. "Haven't you ever had champagne?" asked Sheralee. No, said the blonde, she'd never seen it. "It looks just like ginger ale," said Sheralee, "only it costs lots and lots of money." After several rounds of quizzing, everyone except Texas had been able to answer a few. She hung her hennaed head and Sheralee lectured her severely.

A very tall, very pale Negro girl came over and introduced herself as our Training Bunny. She was thin and fragile as a high fashion model, and very pretty. "She's one of the oldest Bunnies here. Everybody just loves her," said Gloria. "They call colored girls Chocolate Bunnies," said another girl, and giggled.

We spent a hurried hour learning the Bunny Stance (a model's pose with one hip jutted out) and the Bunny Dip (a back-leaning way of placing drinks on low tables without falling out of our costumes). We learned the ritual serving sentences: "Good evening, sir, I am your Bunny Marie. May I see the member's key, please? Are you the keyholder or is this a borrowed key? Thank you, now I'll be happy to take your order." No deviation allowed. I wondered if the uniformity ever bored the customers. "Is there anything else I can get you, Mr. Jones?" "Thank you, Mr. Jones, come back and see us again." I was an IBM machine and I was being programed.

I'm at home now and about to retreat behind greasepaint and false eyelashes. The office will be closed when I get there: no Miss Shay to forbid me to work. My career as a Bunny may be short, but at least it will include one night of "Customer Contact."

◇

Next month, in the second half of "A Bunny's Tale," Miss Steinem undergoes her initiation as a full-fledged Table Bunny, does a Bunny's duties for her allotted time and departs a wiser if not much older young lady.

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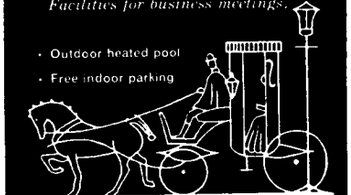

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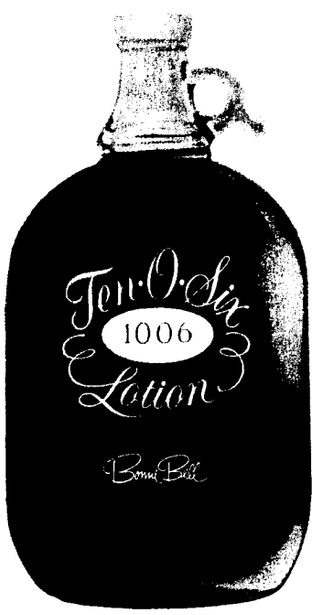

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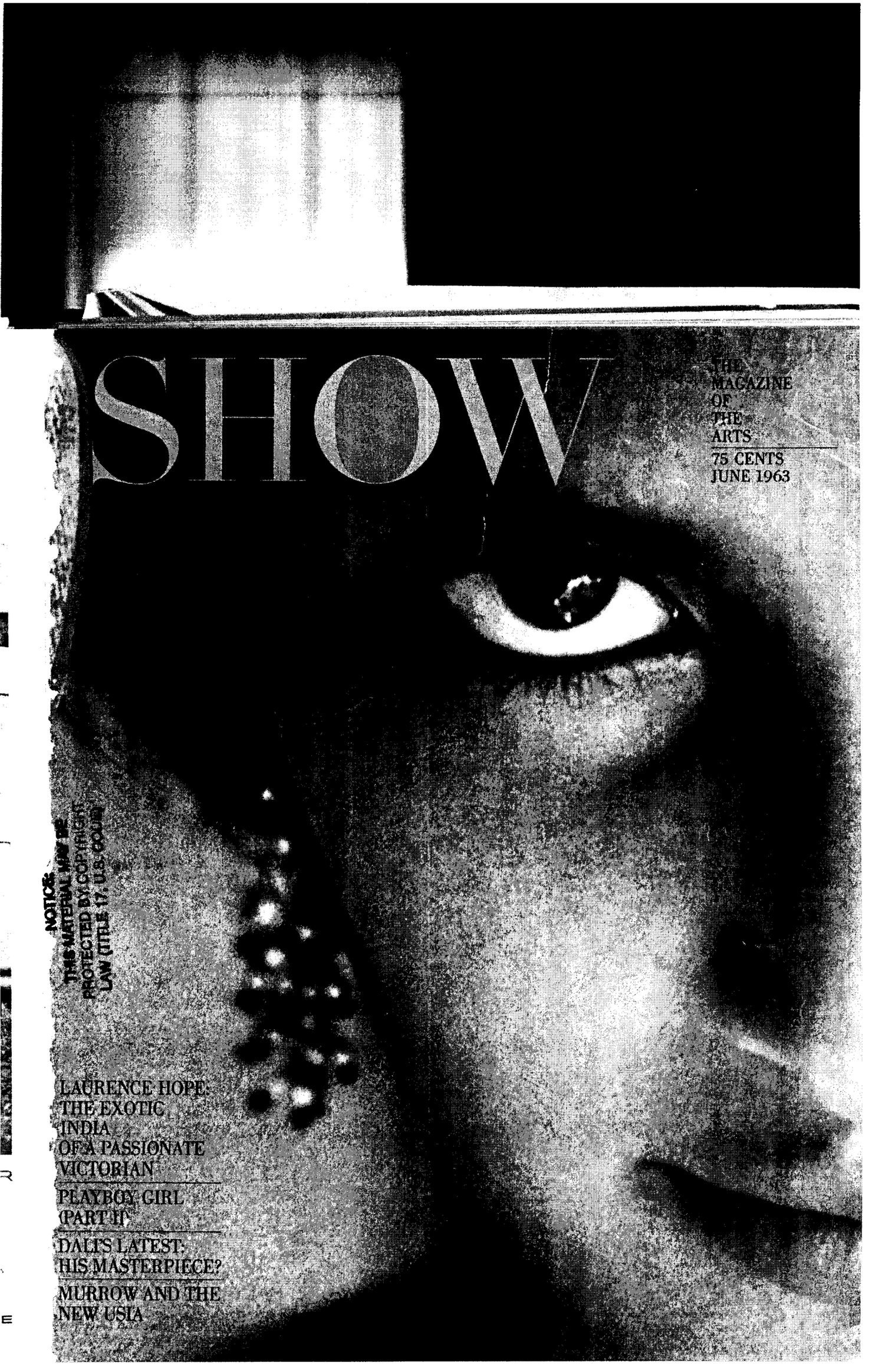

SHOW

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

75 CENTS
JUNE 1963

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LAURENCE HOPE:
THE EXOTIC
INDIA
OF A PASSIONATE
VICTORIAN

PLAYBOY GIRL
(PART II)

DALI'S LATEST:
HIS MASTERPIECE?

MURROW AND THE
NEW USIA

A Bunny's Tale Part II

by Gloria Steinem

Editors' note: As you will remember from last month, our intrepid reporter had adopted a false name (Marie Ochs), answered a classified ad ("Yes, it's true! Attractive young girls can now earn $200–$300 a week at the fabulous New York Playboy Club . . .") and survived two interviews and a tryout in costume to be hired as a Playboy Club Bunny. After a fitting for false eyelashes, a physical examination, a Bunny Mother Lecture, a Bunny Father Lecture, two indoctrination sessions in Bunny School to learn drink-serving rituals, a study of the Bunny Bible and the revelation that nearly all Bunnies are required to stuff their bosoms, Marie had been called into emergency service at the hat-check stand.

As the story reopens, our undercover Bunny is preparing for her very first night's exposure "on the floor."

Our Bunny Marie "on the floor"

Tuesday 5th

The Bunny Room was chaotic and jammed with the usual assortment of girls in high heels and little else. I was pushed and tugged and zipped into my electric-blue costume by the wardrobe mistress, but this time she allowed me to stuff my own bosom and I was able to get away with only half a dry-cleaner's bag. I added the tiny collar with clip-on bow tie and the starched cuffs with Playboy cufflinks. My name plate was centered in a ribbon rosette like those won in horse shows, and I pinned it just above my bare right hipbone. A major policy change, I was told, had just shifted name tags from left hip to right. The wardrobe mistress also gave me a Bunny jacket: it was a below-zero night and I was to stand by the front door. The jacket turned out to be a brief shrug of imitation white fur that covered the shoulders but left the bosom carefully bare.

I went in to be inspected by Bunny Mother Sheralee. "You look *sweet*," she said, and advised that I keep any money I had with me in my costume. "Two more girls have had things stolen from lockers," she said, and added that I should be sure and tell the Lobby Director the exact amount of money I had with me. "Otherwise they may think you stole tips." Table Bunnies, she explained, were allowed to keep any tips they might receive in cash, though the Club did take up to 50 per cent of all their charge tips, but Hat Check Bunnies could keep no tips at all. Instead, they were paid a flat $12 for eight hours. I told her that $12 a day seemed a good deal less than the salary of $200 to $300 mentioned in the advertisement. "Well, you won't work Hat Check all the time, sweetie," she said. "When you start working as a Table Bunny, too, you'll see how it all averages out."

I took a last look at myself in the mirror. A creature with ¾" eyelashes, blue satin ears and an overflowing bosom looked back. I asked Sheralee if we had to stuff ourselves so much. "Of course you do," she said. "Practically all the girls just stuff and stuff. That's the way Bunnies are supposed to look." I nodded and turned toward the door of her small, cement-block office. "Good luck!" she said cheerfully, "and if anybody tries to pull your tail, just report him to the Room Director."

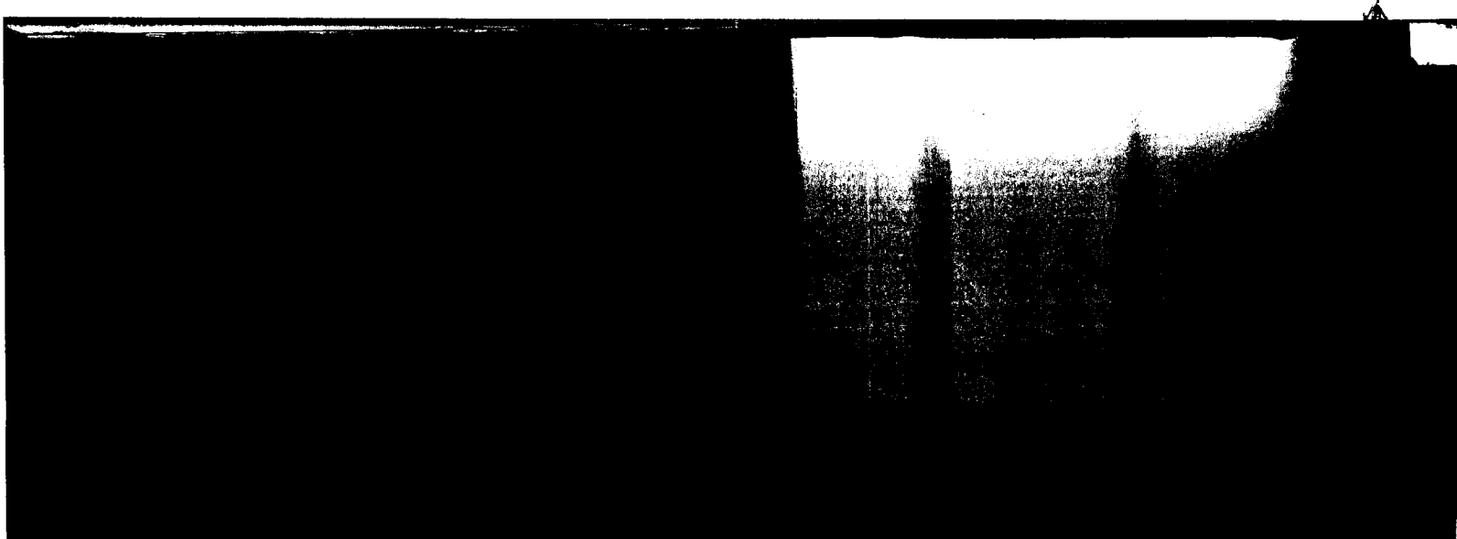
The elevator opened on the mezzanine, and I made my professional debut in the Playboy Club. It was crowded, noisy and very dark. A group of men with organizational name tags on their lapels stood nearby. "Here's my Bunny Honey now," said one, and flung his arm around my shoulders as if we were fellow halfbacks leaving the field.

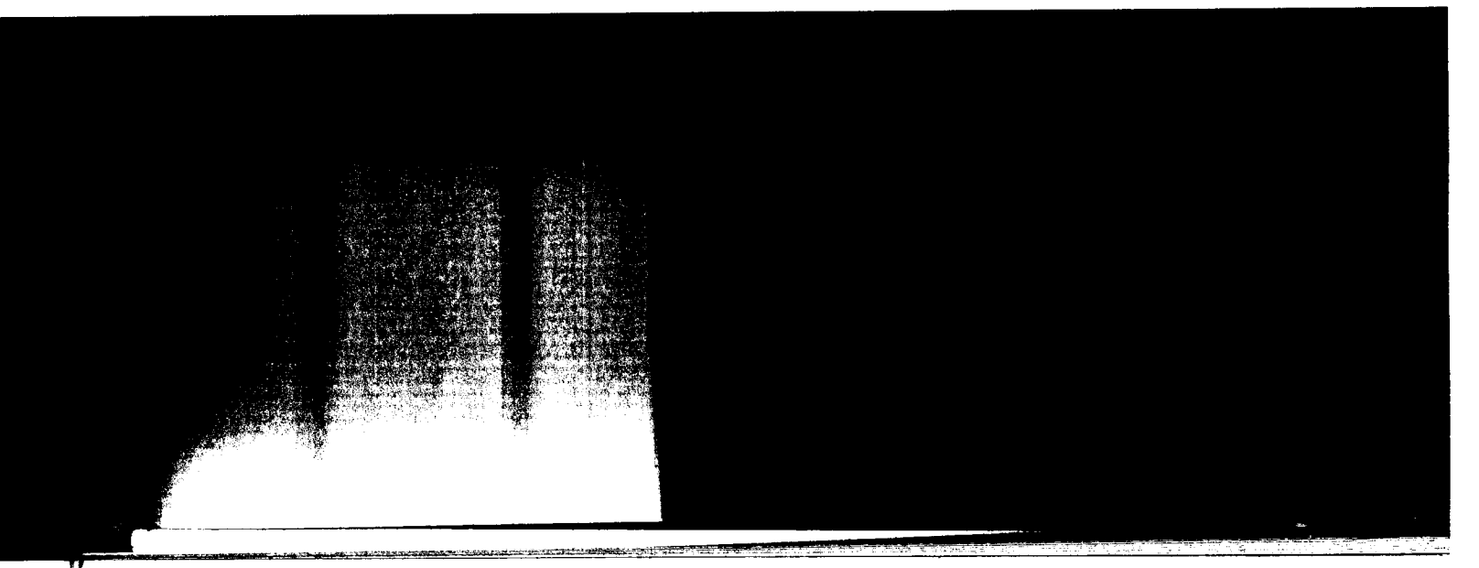
"Please, sir," I said, and uttered the ritual sentence we had learned from the Bunny Father lecture, "you are not allowed to touch the Bunnies." His companions laughed and laughed. "Boy, oh boy, guess she told *you!*" said one, and tweaked my tail as I walked away.

I climbed down the carpeted spiral stairs between the mezzanine ("Living Room, Piano Bar, buffet dinner now being served") and the lobby ("Check your coats, immediate seating in the Playmate Bar"). They are separated from the street by only a two-story sheet of glass. Customers were lined up on the sidewalk, and a group of men in workmen's jackets were standing with their faces pressed to the glass. The only alternative was a broad staircase that descended into the back of the lobby from the Living Room, but that too could be seen from the street. All of us, customers and Bunnies alike, were intended to be a living window display. I reported to the Lobby Director. "Hello, Bunny Marie," he said, "how's things?" I told him that I had $15 in my costume. "I'll remember," he said. I had a quick vision of all the Hat Check Bunnies lined up for bosom inspection.

There was a four-deep crowd of impatient men surrounding the Hat Check Room. The Head Hat Check Bunny, a little blonde who had been imported from Chicago to straighten out the system, told me to take their tickets and call the numbers out to two "hang boys" behind the counter. "I'll give you my number if you give me yours," said a balding man, and he turned to the crowd for appreciation.

After an hour of helping men on with coats, scarves and hats, the cocktail rush had subsided enough for the Chicago Bunny to show me how to pin numbers on coat lapels with straight pins or tuck them in hatbands. She gave me more ritual sentences. "Thank you, sir, here is your ticket," "The Information Bunny is downstairs to your right," and "Sorry, but we're unable to take ladies' coats." She emphasized that I was to put all tips in a slotted box attached to the wall, smile gratefully and not tell the customers





that the tips went to the Club. She moved to the other half of the check room ("The blue tickets are next door, sir") and sent a tall, heavy-set Swiss Bunny to take her place.

The two of us took care of a small stream of customers and talked little. I settled down to my ever-present worry that someone, anyone, I knew was going to come in, recognize me and say "Gloria!" If the rumor was true that one newspaper and one newsmagazine reporter had tried to become Bunnies and failed, the management must be alert to the possibility, and I had seen more than enough Sydney Greenstreet movies to worry about the Club's reaction. I decided that if someone I knew did come in, I would just keep repeating, "There must be some mistake" and hope for the best.

Dinner traffic began, and soon there was a crowd of 20 men waiting. We worked quickly, but coats going in and out at the same time and in the same place made for confusion. One customer was blundering about behind the counter in search of a lost hat and two more were complaining loudly that they had been waiting ten minutes. We ran out of checks and began sending men to the third-floor check room until we could sort out more. "The reason there's a line outside this place," said one, "is because they're waiting for their coats." A man in a blue silk suit reached out to pull my tail. I dodged and held a coat for a balding man with a row of ballpoint pens in his suit pocket. He put it on, but backwards, so that his arms were around me. The hang boy yelled at him in a thick Spanish accent to "Leave her alone." He told the hang boy to shut up. Three women in mink stoles stood waiting for their husbands, and I could see them staring, not with envy but coldly, as if measuring themselves against the Swiss Bunny and me. High up on the opposite wall, a camera stared down at all of us and transmitted the scene to screens imbedded in walls all over the Club, including one screen outside over the sidewalk, "... the closed-circuit television camera that flashes your arrival throughout the Club ..." explained publicity folders. I was overcome by a nightmare sensation of walking naked through crowds, but the only way out was to climb that winding, glass-encased stairway again. Men were still pressing forward with coats outstretched. I turned to the hang boy for more tickets. "Don't worry," he said kindly and smiled. "You get used to it."

Business let up again. I asked the Swiss Bunny if she liked the work. "Not really," she shrugged. "I was an airline hostess for awhile, but once you've seen Hong Kong, you've seen it." A man asked for his coat. I turned around and found myself face to face with two people whom I knew well, a television executive and his wife. I looked down as I took his ticket and kept my back turned while the boy found the coat, but I had to face him again to deliver it. My television friend looked directly at me, gave me a 50-cent piece and walked away. I breathed again. Neither he nor his wife had recognized me. I helped a slight, shy-looking man put on his coat and a long blue and white scarf. To celebrate my victory, I asked him if he and the scarf were from Yale. "Yes," he said, and looked startled, as if he had been recognized at a masquerade.

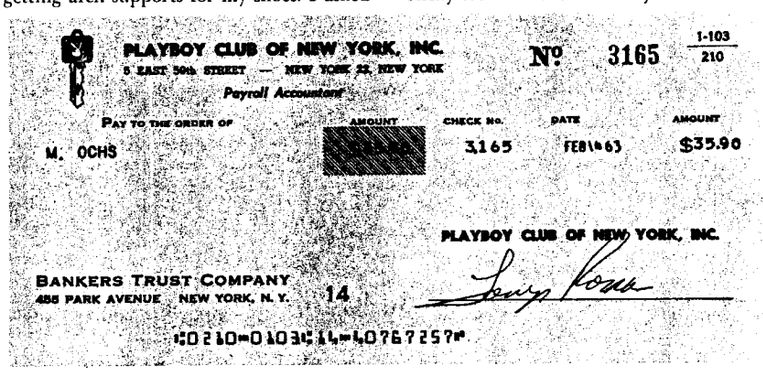
There were no clocks anywhere in the Club. I asked the hang boy what time it was. "One o'clock," he said. I had been working for more than five hours with no break. My fingers were perforated and sore from pushing straight pins through cardboard, my arms ached from holding heavy coats. I was thoroughly chilled from the icy wind that blew in each time a customer opened the door, and, inside my three-inch black satin high heels, my feet were killing me. I walked over to ask the Chicago Bunny if I could take a break. Yes, she said, I could have a half-hour to eat, but no more.

Down the hall from the Bunny Room was the Employees' Lounge, where our meal tickets entitled us to one free meal a day. I pulled a metal folding chair up to a long bare table, took my shoes off gingerly and sat down next to two Negroes in gray work uniforms. They looked sympathetic. One was young and quite handsome, the other middle-aged and graying at the temples: like all employees at the Club, they seemed chosen, at least partly, for their appearance. The older one advised me about rolling bottles under my feet to relax them and getting arch supports for my shoes. I asked what they did. "We're garbage men," said the younger. "It don't sound so good, I know, but it's easier than your job." They told me I should eat something and gestured to the beef stew on their paper plates. "Friday we get fish," one said, "but every other day is the same stew." "The same, maybe 'cept it get worse," said the other, and laughed. The older one told me he felt sorry for the Bunnies even though he knew that some of them enjoyed "showing off their looks." He told me to be careful of my feet and not to try to work double shifts. They were very kind.

Back downstairs, I tried to categorize the customers as I checked their coats. With the exception of a few teenage couples, the majority seemed to be middle-aged businessmen. Less than half had women with them, and the rest came in large, expense-account bunches. I saw only four of the type I had imagined, the type pictured in Club advertisements—the young, lean, nattily dressed Urban Man—and they were with slender, fashionable girls who looked rather appalled by our stuffed costumes and bright makeup. Many of the businessmen's wives appeared to be measuring themselves against us, but some, the least confident ones, didn't try. They seemed to take it as a matter of course that their husbands would be attracted to us, and they stood aside, looking embarrassed. There were a few customers, a very few, either men or women (I counted ten), who looked at us not as objects but smiled and nodded calmly as if we might be human beings.

The Swiss Bunny took a break, and the hang boy who had told me that I would "get used to it" began to give me a gentle lecture. I was foolish, he said, to put all that money in the box. The tips were cash. Nobody knew how much money there was. If we didn't take it, the man who counted it might. I told him that I was afraid they would look in my costume and that I didn't want to get fired. "They only check you girls once in a while," he said. "Anyway, I make you a deal. You give me money. I meet you outside. We split it." My feet ached, my fingers were sticky from dozens of sweaty hatbands and my skin was gouged and sore from the bones of the costume. I calculated that even the half-hour dinner break had been on my own time so that the Club was getting a full eight hours of work, and I felt resentful enough to take him up on it. Still, it would hardly do to get fired for stealing. I told him that I was a new Bunny and too nervous to try it. "You'll get over that," he said. "One Saturday night last week, this check room took in $1,000 in tips. And you know how much we get paid. You think about that."

It was almost 4 A.M. and quitting time.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The Lobby Director came over to tell us that the customer count for the night was about 2,000. I said that sounded good. "No," he said. "Good is 4,000."

I went back to the Bunny Room, turned in my costume and sat motionless, too tired to move. The stays had made precise indentations in my skin and the zipper had left a welt over my spine. I complained of the costume's tightness to the Bunny who was sitting next to me, also motionless. "Yeah," she said, "a lot of girls say their legs get numb from the knee up. I think it presses on a nerve or something."

The street was deserted, but a taxi waited at the curb. I left by the employees' exit and emerged next to the white canopies of the Club's entrance. The driver held a dollar bill out the window. "I got four more of these," he said. "Is that enough?"

I kept on walking. "Whats'a matter?" he said, irritated. "You work in there, don't you?"

Fifth Avenue was brightly lit and its sidewalks sparkled with frost. As I walked the last block to my apartment, I passed a gray English car with the motor running. A woman was sitting in the driver's seat, smoking a cigarette and watching the street. Her hair was bright blonde and her coat bright red. She looked at me and smiled. I smiled back. She looked available and was. Of the two of us, she seemed the more honest. Or maybe I was just overtired.

Wednesday 6th

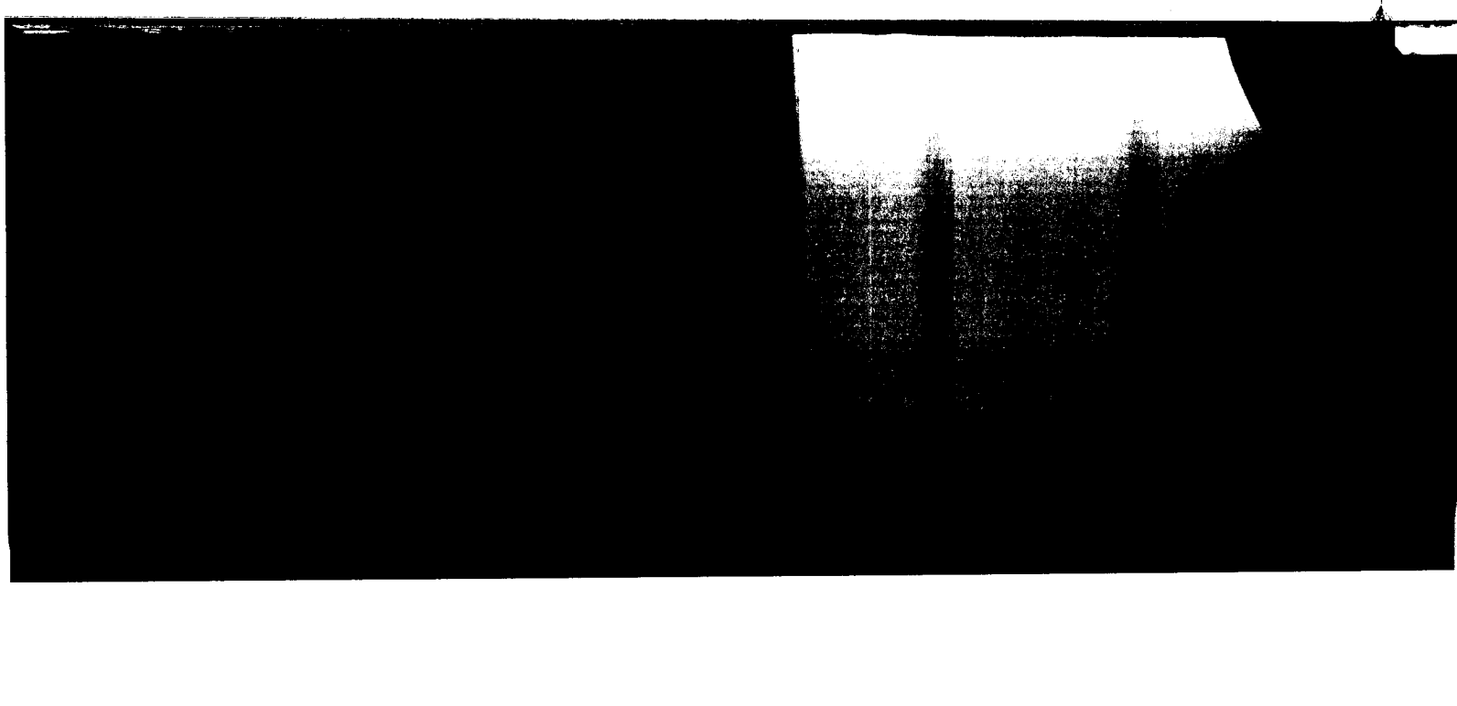
I got up just in time to rush back to the Club for my two o'clock Table Bunny Training and arrived feeling that I had never left. As I changed into my costume, one of the Bunnies was reading aloud from the current issue of a weekly tabloid called *Leo Shull's Show Guide*. "Listen to this," she said. "It says, 'Although a thousand girls were interviewed for the club and 125 are working there now, the Playboy Club's fantastic business, the lines and crowds of customers thronging there daily, have made it necessary to add another 50 Bunnies.' " I had heard Sheralee say that she was very shorthanded with only 103 Bunnies on schedule. I asked the girl who was reading if we really needed that many more. They probably did, she said, because the Club had opened with 140 Bunnies and nearly 50 of them had quit. Another girl disagreed. "I heard that 20 of them were fired and 40 more quit, but I think it's more than that because we've only got about a hundred now and a lot of them are new Bunnies." I said I was going to ask Miss Shay, just out of curiosity, how many of the original Bunnies quit. "Don't bother, sweetie. Nobody around here ever tells us anything."

I picked up the paper and read on: "The girls, in this reporter's opinion, are the most beautiful ladies ever seen together under one roof. Most of them have superior education as well, and fine breeding. They are trained to give the optimum in restaurant service. . . . Their earnings are three to ten times as much as they could earn in any similar position. Average earnings are $200 to $300 and 'Bunnies' meet the most attractive people. . . ." The article ended with the address of the Club and instructions on how to apply. "Two hundred dollars to $300 a *what*," said the dissident Bunny, "a month?" I asked how much she earned. "I got $108 this week," she said, "and the girl with the biggest check got $145." I asked if she was waiting on tables. She said she was. "The next time Leo Shull comes in here, I'm going to ask him where he gets his figures." "Watch out," said the newspaper Bunny, "he's a Number One Keyholder. Besides," she said seriously, "somebody told me that a couple of the girls *have* made $200."

Sheralee called me into her office. She was still desperate for "over-21 girls" who could work until four in the morning. Would I take the hat check concession again that night? I deliberated. It was a chance to work again before Miss Shay, the Personnel Director, tried to check some of my uncheckable references, or remembered that I had never turned in the requested birth certificate to prove I was over 21, or got word from the Michigan birth registration office that there was no such person as Marie Ochs. On the other hand, I had slept six hours since my last ordeal and would be training as a Table Bunny from 2:00 to 6:00 that afternoon before going right back to a full day's work again at 7:30. My feet were still so swollen from the night before that I could barely get my regulation three-inch heels on, and I had gauze wrapped around my middle where the costume had dug in. I decided to take a chance on not being found out for a little longer and explained my tiredness to Sheralee. Couldn't she find someone else? "I'll try," she said, and looked annoyed. "But if I can't, I'm still counting on you."

I took the elevator to the mezzanine again and crossed to the spiral stairs. To be in that costume walking down that staircase seemed even more surrealistic in broad daylight, with dozens of lunchtime shoppers staring in through the glass, than it had the night before. One of the Room Directors was waiting for me at the bottom. "Go back up and come down again," he said, gesturing toward the crowds in the street. "Give the boys a treat." Disobeying a Room Director was an automatic 15 demerits, according to the Bunny Bible. I searched for an excuse. "Look," I said, "I'm late to meet a Number One Keyholder." "Go ahead, kid," he said and smiled. "Get a move on."

I walked down the stairs at the back of the lobby to the Playmate Bar, where I was to report for training. It had been dark and deserted when I came there for my first interview with Miss Shay. Now it was alive with a lunchtime crowd and the wall behind the bar glowed with blown-up color transparencies of semi nude Playmates from the centerspread of *Playboy*. *(Continued on page 110)*



A BUNNY'S TALE: PART II

(Continued from page 68)

I went to the service area at the end of the bar and set up a tray with bar cloth, Playboy lighter and all the other items that had been prescribed in Bunny School the day before. My Training Bunny gave me checks and told me to follow her as she made the rounds of her station. She introduced me at each table, saying, "This is Bunny Marie and she is a Bunny in training." At the last table, two men told me I would be O.K. if I did everything they said, and the first thing to do was get rid of my sourpuss Training Bunny. "Don't pay any attention to those jerks," she said. "They've been guzzling all afternoon and just think they're smart." I said maybe they were from Willmark* and being difficult just to test her. "Don't be silly," she said. "You can always spot a Willmark man. He never has more than two drinks."

Two of her tables were empty, and she told me to wait on anyone who sat there. My first two customers carried plastic briefcases and wore veterans' buttons in their lapels. I approached them as confidently as I could and embarked on the serving ritual. "Good afternoon, sir, I am your Bunny Marie," I said, and put a napkin in front of each ("... this procedure informs the Room Director which guests have been served ..."), taking care to look directly at him as I did so ("... eye contact each of your guests immediately"). "May I see the member's key, please?" One of the customers gave me his Playboy Club key together with a room key from the Hotel Astor. I gave back the hotel key and started to fill out the check. "Well," he said, "you can't blame a man for trying." "Nope," said his friend, "you can't tell us your address but nothing's to stop you from remembering ours." He slapped the table and laughed. They both ordered Old Fashioneds.

I filled glasses with ice, called the order in at the bar and asked how I was supposed to put in the proper garbage.† "With your hands, how else?" said the bartender. I picked up two orange slices and dredged around in a large trough full of juice until I found two cherries. With the drinks balanced on my tray, I approached the two veterans. "Are you married?" asked the table-slapper. I said no. "Well, it wouldn't matter anyway, because I'm married too!" I put my right hip into the table, bent my knees, inclined myself backward in the required Bunny Dip and placed the glasses squarely on the napkins. I felt like an idiot.

"You're doing just fine," my Training Bunny whispered sweetly, and yelled, "One J&B, one CC and two Martinis straight up," at the bartender.

I waited on three more parties, all men. Two said, "If you're my Bunny, can I take you home?" and one asked if my picture was above the bar. My veterans left me a dollar tip. I thanked them and told them they were my first customers. The table-slapper punched his friend in the arm and doubled over with laughter. "This girl," he said, still laughing, "this girl's a *Virgin Bunny!*" He wiped tears from his eyes.

At 6:00, I turned my checks back to the Training Bunny. All the tips that had been charged on them went to her, which was presumably her reward for training. I told her the veterans had left a dollar. "You can keep it," she said magnanimously. I tucked it into the Vault,* as I had seen the other Bunnies do, and went upstairs to change.

I was unfurling the plastic dry cleaner's bag from my bosom when Miss Shay entered the Bunny Room. I had never seen her there before and I was sure my lack of credentials had caught up with me. She might not have been aware of my emergency call to hat check duty, but she probably did know about tomorrow's assignment of serving drinks from 8:00 to midnight. Miss Shay stopped next to me. "Keep up the good work," she said, confidentially. "I hear you're a very good Bunny."

I was elated, and decided to risk asking about "the other Marie Ochs." Ever since my first interview when Miss Shay startled me by saying that another girl with my name had applied, I had been curious and a little worried. "What other Marie Ochs?" she said, and disappeared into the Bunny Mother's office.

I am at home and Sheralee has just phoned to say that she found another Hat Check Bunny for tonight. My luck is holding.

Thursday 7th

I went to the Bunny Room an hour early tonight to see what I could learn about my sister Bunnies. I had read in newspapers before the Club opened that many were college girls, actresses, artists and even linguists. I asked the Bunny dressing next to me about the linguists, who intrigued me most. She said yes, there were quite a few foreign girls working the VIP Room. (As I had read in the Bunny Bible, "That stands for Very Important Playboy, of course.") In fact, they had to be foreign and speak English with an accent to work in this room specializing in dinner and midnight supper. I said it sounded as if Bunnies made a lot of money there. "Not really," she said. "It only seats 50 and it's for dinner so the turnover is slow. You're better off serving drinks and getting the jerks in and out fast." I asked about the college girls. "Oh sure," she said, "I think there are three or four who go to classes during the week and work on weekends." How could they always get the weekends, which were the big tip nights? "Listen, friend," she said, "there are some people around here who get to pick whatever shift they want, and the rest of us get stuck with a week of lunches or that lousy hat check bit. Mostly, it's the old girls from Chicago or somebody who's got an 'in' with the management." Couldn't that just be seniority? "Sure," she said, searching for a place to put the Bunny ears on her upswept hairdo, "only there isn't supposed to be a seniority system. 'You're all treated alike,' that's what they tell us." I asked what she had done before becoming a Bunny. "Nothing much, a little modeling once in a while." And what did she hope working as a Bunny would lead to? "I thought maybe I could save enough money to get some test shots and a composite and I could be a real model," she said. "But after three months of this, I want to get married. Guys I wouldn't look at before, now I think they aren't so bad."

I moved to the other side of the dressing table where four girls were eating doughnuts and drinking chocolate milk ("... eating in the Bunny Room, 5 demerits ...") and introduced myself as a new Bunny. First-name introductions were made all around. They seemed glad of a diversion and offered me a doughnut. I asked about the college girls again. "Yeah, there are some," said one. "I met a girl the other day, she was taking a course in photography." I asked what they had done before, and what they wanted to do. Three said they wanted very much to be photographic or live models, not high fashion, but in advertising or the garment industry. The fourth said that she was married, had a baby and was just picking up money as a Bunny because she wasn't trained for anything. They asked about me and I repeated what I had put on my application blank as a likely, but not startling, background for a Bunny: that I had worked as a waitress (true, though it was during college vacations), that I had danced in nightclubs and once hoped to be a professional dancer (also true, though I had to do some switching of dates to make myself younger), and that I had most recently worked as an office clerk (untrue, but it was the only thing I could make up references for). "Say, you've done a lot," said the girl who was hoping to crash the garment industry. "What the hell do you want to be a Bunny for?" I told them that everything I'd heard about the Club sounded great, and I read to them the latest *Playboy Club News:* "Bunnies don't give up wages for glamor. A Bunny can easily earn twice the amount in a week that a good secretary averages.... An exciting extra is the anticipation of being discovered. Many Bunnies have moved on into the entertainment field and now can be seen in movies, nightclub acts or as models...." There was a small silence. "Well, sure," said one, "if they say that, it must have happened to *some* girls." Another said that one of the Chicago Bunnies had been on the cover of *Playboy* about a year ago, and that there was supposed to be a Bunny on a cover again soon. "Yeah," said a third, "but I hear that's just because they're short of Bunnies and they're trying to get more."

It was nearly eight o'clock, time to put on my bright orange costume (more comfortable, I hoped, than the electric blue) and serve drinks in the Living Room.

Again I had a Training Bunny whose checks I used, but this time I had a whole station to take care of because one Table Bunny was missing. "Wouldn't you know it," said my Training Bunny. "A girl gets in a car accident and it has to be from my shift."

My tables were in the Cartoon Corner, i.e., a corner of the Living Room that was walled with mounted cartoons from *Playboy*. It was considered a difficult station because it was the depth of the building from the bar, with four steps to climb in between. The Bunny Tray Technique involved carrying our small round trays high and balanced on the palm of the left hand as we looked straight ahead and did the stylish, faintly wiggly, Bunny Walk. It seemed simple enough, but after an hour of carrying trays loaded with ice cubes, full bottles of mixes and a half-dozen drinks, my left arm began to shake and the blood seemed permanently drained from its fingers and hand. And I was still not getting paid. I complained to my Training Bunny but she said I really had no grounds for it. The girls hired before the December opening of the Club had trained for three weeks with no pay.

I did learn a lot. I served 22 customers, spilled two drinks (one on me and one on a customer) and got propositioned twice. I also learned from the musicians at the Piano Bar that there is a song called "Playboy's Theme"* and that these are some of its lyrics:

If your boy's a PLAYBOY,
Loosen your control.
If his eye meanders,
Sweet goose your gander's,
Just one more ornery critter,
Who goes for the glitter.
So if you've been over-heatin' your oven,
Just remember that the boy is a PLAYBOY,
And the gal that makes a fireside lovin' man of the boy,
Gets him to stay.
Never talks to him but sweetly,
When he plays it indiscreetly,
Never takes the play completely
Away.

One of the diverse duties of the Willmark men is to make sure that this theme is played at the beginning and end of every musical show every evening. Like "God Save the Queen."

Friday 8th

Tonight was my first as a full-fledged professional Table Bunny, but at the moment, I am almost totally absorbed in my feet. Because they hurt. They ache like teeth and are so swollen that I can't get sneakers on. The thought foremost in my mind is that my arches may be falling, but random impressions do come back.

Item: I had all the tables in Cartoon Corner, twice as many as last night, from 7:30 to 4:00 in the morning with no break. Loaded trays to balance on one hand, 16 round trips to the bar each hour until I lost

*Representatives of Willmark, Inc., retained by the Playboy Club to pose as customers while testing Bunnies for efficiency, cheerfulness, clean tails, etc., and whether or not Bunnies will accept dates (they aren't supposed to) with or without the lure of money.

†Bunny-ese for drink garnishes.

*Where Bunnies keep tips, i.e., their bosoms.

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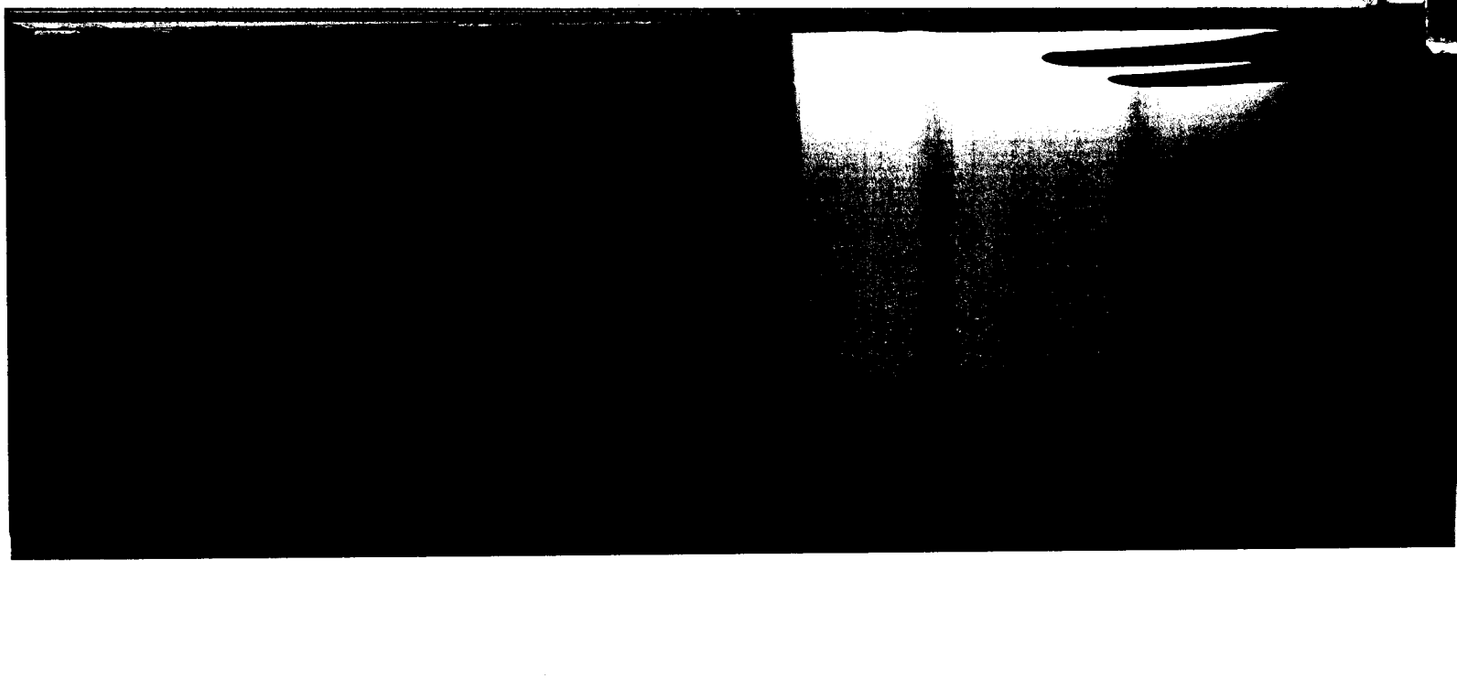


count, three iced drinks spilled down my back and two green olives to eat all evening. Why didn't I just give up, lie down, kick, refuse? I wish I knew.

Item: The bartender in the Living Room is an artist. Fast, graceful, exact and calm, he kept the room going almost single-handedly. "Last week, including overtime and bonus," he said, "I made $180 and I'm the highest-paid bartender in the house." Why doesn't he quit? "I'm going to."

Item: Customers' drinks are garnished by Bunny-hand, and employees eat on the run from communal plates of food swiped from the customers' buffet. We're one big family.

Item: $29.85 in cash tips—all in one-dollar bills and silver—makes for prosperity and a very uncomfortable costume. And I lost five pounds last night.

Saturday 9th

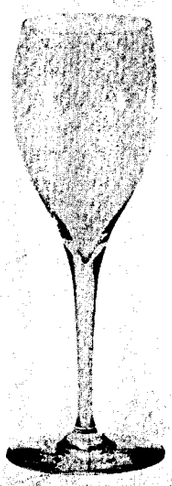
My arches did not fall. I put on my rain boots and went to a chiropodist ("I do all the Copa girls") who said there was nothing wrong with my feet except long hours, high heels and muscle strain. "In a job like that," he said cheerfully, "your feet are bound to get a few sizes bigger."

I worked the Living Room again tonight, but at a station right next to the bar, and 9:30 to 3:00 instead of 7:30 to 4:00. By wearing borrowed shoes three sizes too large and coaxing busboys to help me carry heavy trays, I managed to get through it and was rewarded with the following bits of information:

1. A Bunny who has been a Playmate—that is, who has posed for the fold-out picture in *Playboy*—gets $5 a day more salary than other Bunnies. She is also obliged to approach customers with, "I'm your Playmate Sue" instead of "I'm your Bunny Sue."
2. In a letter written to mollify New Yorkers who had bought keys to the Club, which is now open to the public, Hugh Hefner said that nonmembers "must secure a temporary pass good for one visit only and they must pay cash in advance for anything they order before they are served." Perhaps it is contrary to Mr. Hefner's instructions, but Bunnies are told to collect *after* each round on cash sales, but there are few who do even that. Most of the ones I questioned say that they allow cash customers to run up bar bills just as if they were keyholders. If anything, Bunnies seem to prefer serving a nonmember because they are assured of getting a cash tip instead of splitting a charge tip with the house.
3. Bunnies and busboys have a fascinating kind of love-hate relationship. A good busboy can make a Bunny wealthier by keeping her tables cleared for new customers. A bad busboy can send her to the poorhouse by whisking away cash tips before she sees them and insisting that the customer stiffed* her. As a result, a Bunny may spend all her working hours cajoling and vamping a boy whom she wouldn't dream of spending time on outside the Club. It's a hothouse relationship, but a close one. Like women and their hairdressers, they tell each other everything.
4. Plastic dry cleaner's bags are regarded as dangerous stuffing by many Bunnies because they make you perspire, thereby causing a weight loss where you least want it. Kleenex and absorbent cotton are preferred.
5. The Way to Get Something to Eat Though a Table Bunny is to snitch it from the customers' buffet (on pain of instant dismissal, according to a recent memo) and hide it in the supply room. You can then grab a bite whenever you pass through. Almost no one goes to the Employees' Room to eat stew.

*Did not leave a tip.

BACCARAT



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Sunday 10th

I got home at 4 A.M. and had to be back at the Club and in costume by 11 A.M. for publicity photos. I was furious at first (25 demerits if I didn't show up), but once awake and outside, I was glad: it was the first time in nearly three days that I'd seen full daylight.

The *Playboy* photographer was posing girls on the broad curving staircase at the back of the lobby. Each of us was put through a cheesecake series: sitting on the steps with legs outstretched, standing with our hands posed on the railing ("bend over from the waist, dear, over a little more...") and walking down the stairs with tray held high.

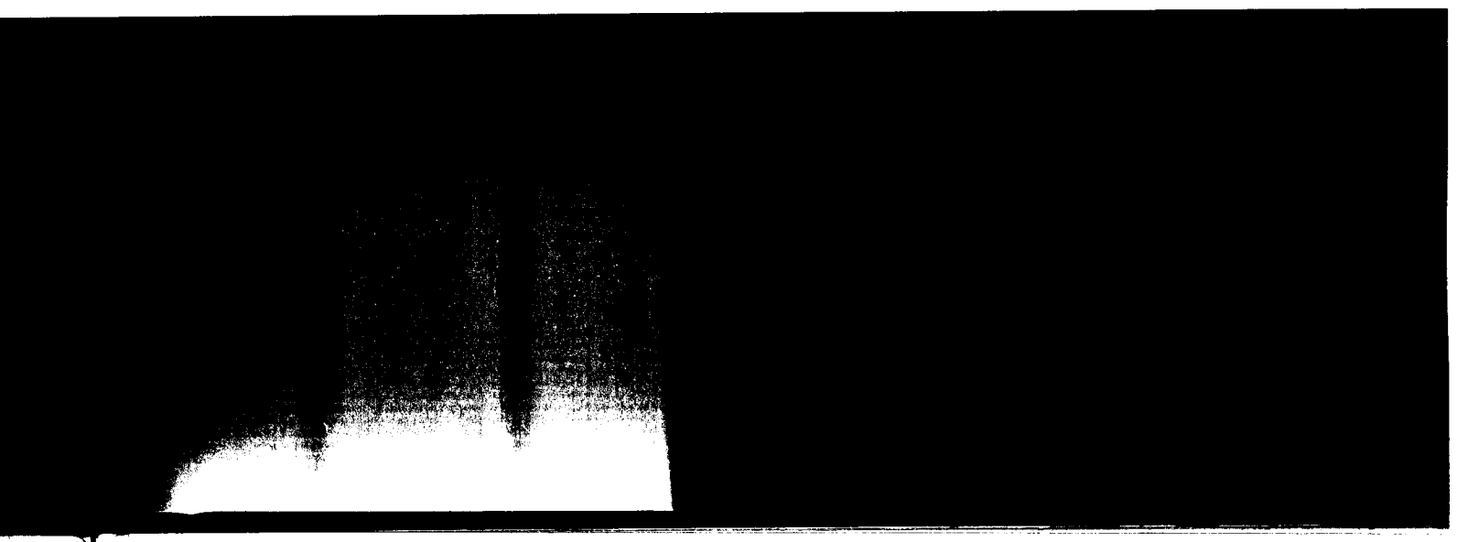
I asked what the photographs would be used for. "I don't know," he said, "I just got rush orders from Chicago." As a matter of routine, new Bunnies were asked to sign a release of all photographs. Would our pictures turn up in some Playboy Club promotion, or in *Playboy* itself? No one knew.

A voice called to me from the darkness of the Playmate Bar. It was Miss Shay, sitting at the desk where I had first seen her, waiting for prospective Bunnies to come in for interviews. The photographer had asked if we could turn on taped music. "Marie will play," she said. "Marie plays the piano very well, don't you, dear?" No, I said, I didn't play at all. "I'm sure you told me so when I interviewed you," she said firmly.

The oversight of my credentials, the other Marie Ochs and now my piano playing: it seemed that Miss Shay, though very efficient in most areas, didn't have a very good memory. I thought of the several times I had heard her call busboys by an exact first name but not the right one. That was the explanation. For the first time I was quite sure that, unless someone actually recognized me, I could work at the Playboy Club as long as I liked.

Out in the bright sunlight again, I wondered just how long I did want to stay. If Marie wasn't going to be discovered, I would have to end her career, and my impulse was to do it immediately.

Still, I had lived through those



weekend nights which were the worst of it. According to this week's Bunny Schedule, I would be serving lunch for four hours each day and no more. It wasn't an envied assignment because the tips were bad, but it would give me more time to talk to Bunnies.

I decided that Marie could live until next Friday.

Monday 11th

A story in today's *Metropolitan Daily* was the talk of the Bunny Room. One of two ex-Bunnies who are suing the Club for back tips and "misrepresentation" has told reporters that she received anonymous death threats immediately after filing the suit.

"I knew Phyllis Sands," said one girl, "but not this Betsy McMillan who got the threats." She studied their pictures. "They made sure to give out good publicity shots." Did she think the alleged threats were made up just for publicity? "Who knows?" she shrugged. "Maybe she wasn't told that the Club would take half her tips and maybe her salary was a lot lower than she had expected. On the other hand, maybe she just had her boyfriend call up and threaten her so she'd get her name in the paper. Who knows?"

I went downstairs to the Playroom and began setting up tables for lunch. Of the six other Bunnies, I had met three: a Chinese Bunny, a Bunny who announced that *she* didn't *have* to stuff her bosom and the big, baby-voiced redhead whom I'd met the first day in the Bunny Room. The Room Director assigned us our stations, and we sat down on the apron of the stage to wait for customers. The un-stuffed Bunny talked about how much better tips were in Chicago, and I asked why. "Well, they're dumber there," she said. "I mean it's easier to make them think you'll go out with them, and then they tip you more." "It's lousy at the Miami Club, too," said baby voice. "One time we all got together and said we'd quit if they didn't pay us more, but they said to go right ahead, they'd just hire more girls." I said maybe the girls had been out-bluffed. A little dark-haired Bunny said sure, it would cost the Club a hell of a lot if we all quit together. What would they do? "Bring in girls from the other Clubs," said baby voice. "You can't win." There was a piano at center stage. She went over to it and pretended to play a jazz arrangement that was being piped into the room. *"Laaaa-tee-ta-tee-tum,"* sang baby voice. A Bunny with long brown hair got up and went through the motions of a very professional striptease. "They asked me to be a Playmate once," she said, "but I couldn't do it now. I'm too thin." The little dark-haired Bunny told her it didn't matter because they always used a fake, composite body anyway, and that she personally knew the girl who did the breasts. I said I doubted it very much, because there's only so much you can do with an air brush. "Anyway, they must use different girls," said the stripping Bunny, "because the breasts are in different shapes." *"They co-omme in different shapes,"* sang baby voice, and got up to do her own striptease. She took off her bow tie, collar and cuffs and tossed them off the stage, accompanying each with an expert bump.

"O.K., girls," said the Room Director. "Cut it." Three middle-aged customers, the first of the lunchtime onslaught, were squinting into the spot-lit gloom from the doorway.

"Wouldn't you know it," said baby voice, disgusted. "Here come the suckers."

Serving lunch is somewhat easier. Four hours isn't quite enough to open up all my old foot wounds, but the piled-up plates of roast beef (which is all we serve: our Room Director is called "The Roast Beef King") make a tray even heavier than a full load of drinks. Bunnies new to each room seem to get a trial by fire. I again had the station farthest from the bar and the kitchen. And the customers are all men. The heavy sprinkling of dates and wives in the evening crowd disappears, and the average male customer seems older and his face more florid. One told me over and over again that he was vice president of an insurance company and that he would pay me to serve at a private party in his hotel. Another got up from his fourth martini to breathe heavily down my neck. When I pulled away, he was sincerely angry. "What do you think I come here for," he said, "roast beef?"

At 3:00, when the final table had been cleared, I went back to the Bunny Room. The wardrobe mistress stopped me as I passed. "Baby," she said, "that costume is way too big on you." It was true that I had lost ten pounds in the few days since the costume had been made, and it was also true that, for the first time, it was no more uncomfortable than a tight girdle. She marked the waist with pins and told me to take it off. "I'll have it fitting you right when you come tomorrow," she said. "Needs two inches off on each side."

I took the same copy of *Playboy Club News* out of my locker: "The Playboy Club world is filled with good entertainment, beautiful girls, fun-loving playboys... it's always on the go, like a continuous house party. Cheerful Bunnies feel as though they are among the invited guests...." My co-workers from the Playroom giggled. "Some party," said baby voice. "You're not even supposed to go out with the customers." I asked if any of the Willmark representatives tried to trap her into going out. "Nooooo," she said thoughtfully, "but one did offer another Bunny $200 just for promising she'd meet him after work." "What happened?" "She took it," said baby voice contemptuously, and shook her head in wonder. "She should have known. Nobody but a shmuck or a Willmark man would offer you the

money *before,"* she said wisely.

Tuesday 12th

Two of my classmates from Bunny School, Gloria and the ex-magician's assistant, joined us in the Playroom today. I found myself explaining how to serve drinks and roast beef and how to convince the customer that it was rare, medium or well-done, though it was, in fact, all the same.

Some offices were closed for Lincoln's Birthday and business was slow. I sat at the edge of the stage and listened to the un-stuffed Bunny explain that she liked older men because they gave you money. "I went out with this old guy I met in the Club last week, and fixed up two other Bunnies with his friends. You know, he gave me a hundred-dollar check just because he liked me? I didn't do anything, honest. He just liked me." I asked how she knew this one wasn't a Willmark man. "Well, if they drink more than two drinks, you're safe. Anyhow, that's the rule I use."

The un-stuffed Bunny went on to tell how one of the Playboy executives had given her $700 for a dress. "I had $500," she said, "and I bought a dress for $1,200 and he took me to a party in it." A dark-haired Bunny said yes, she knew the same guy in Chicago. "Doesn't everybody?" said the un-stuffed Bunny. "If you counted all the Bunnies who went out with that guy, you... well, you couldn't count them." The dark-haired Bunny looked pensive. "We had this crazy thing going for three weeks," she said. "It was wild. I guess I should have known that nothing would come of it..." *"All* the girls think something will come of it," said the un-stuffed Bunny comfortingly, "but it never does." They went on to discuss the personal attributes of this executive, his huge apartment, his great wealth and his romantic impulsiveness. He sounded like an artist in over-kill. *"Somebody* ought to warn girls that nothing's ever going to come of it," said the dark-haired Bunny. Un-stuffed got up to serve a customer, and the dark-haired Bunny looked after her with disdain. "I don't believe he ever gave her $700 for a dress," she said firmly. *"Nobody* ever gets money out of *him."*

Wednesday 13th

The Chinese Bunny disclosed today that she uses gym socks to stuff her bosom, thus completing my unofficial list of Bunny Bosom Stuffers:

1) Kleenex
2) plastic dry cleaner's bags
3) absorbent cotton
4) cut-up Bunny tails
5) foam rubber
6) lamb's wool
7) Kotex halves
8) silk scarves
9) gym socks

After work today, I shuffled through the stacks of Bunny literature in Sheralee's office and found a memo dated December 4, 1962, that I had not seen before. It was a list of all those who hold "Initial" or Number One Keys. According to our Bunny Mother Lecture, these are the Playboy executives, members of the press and others important to Playboy whose checks are paid by the Club. They are the only men met through the Club with whom we may go out.

The press names form a pretty uniform list of the gossip columnists and entertainment editors to whom many big restaurants and nightclubs extend hospitality. (There are even three women: Dorothy Kilgallen of the *Journal-American,* Gwen Harrison of the Miami *Herald* and Maggie Daly, whose Chicago *American* column, "Daly Diary," has been reprinted in the *Playboy Club News.)* But there do seem to be some inequities. The New York *Herald Tribune*'s Hy Gardner is listed, but there is no one from the New York *Times.* Frank Farrell of the *World-Telegram* is on, but Walter Winchell of the *Daily Mirror* is not. Television men appear on the Chicago and Miami lists, but there are no radio or TV representatives from New York.

I saw no names at all that I recognized as society columnists. Hugh Hefner has written that the New York Club "has already become the favorite dining, drinking and meeting place of New York... society," but I'm sure that the list included no names of society reporters.

A girl in the Bunny Room asked me to zip her up. I told her I had been looking at the Number One Keyholder list and asked if there were any other people whom it was all right to date. "Well, you can date customers if you can get away with it." I said I knew, but that I didn't want to get fired and that I wondered what men we *could* go out with. "You can go out with guys introduced to you by Number One Keyholders," she said, "or anyone you meet at Vic Lownes's parties." We had been told about the parties given at Vic Lownes's apartment in New York or Hugh Hefner's house in Chicago and encouraged to go to them. They were evidently promotion and business entertaining for the Clubs or the magazine. "They're great parties," she said. "Vic is out of town for a while, but there'll be more when he comes back. They like you to come as long as you don't bring your own date."

Friday 15th

The Playroom was crowded today, full of men drinking, because it was Friday afternoon. I ran from tables to bar and back again carrying plates of roast beef and the Friday-only alternate, trout. Bunny Gloria was standing with a tray full of cups, waiting for the coffee urn to be filled. "You know what we are?" she said indignantly. "We're *waitresses!"* I said maybe we ought to join a union. "Unions just take your money," said baby voice, "and they won't let you work double shifts."

The magician's assistant was serving a table next to mine and agreeing earnestly that our costumes were

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"so intelligently made, so flattering to a girl's body." She had been nervous and flustered all week. She tried so hard to do things, as the Bunny Bible said, "like a gracious hostess," that she might never become an efficient waitress. In programing us with, as one Bunny put it, "all that glamor crap," the Club sometimes defeated itself.

It was my last day of lunches and I was glad. Somehow, the usual tail-pullings and propositions and pinching and ogling seemed all the more depressing when, outside this spot-lit, blank-walled room, the sun was shining.

I found Sheralee in her office and told her the story I had planned to tell, that my mother was ill and I had to go home for a while. She was dismayed. "But we're so short of Bunnies *now!*" she said, and asked when I could come back. I had chosen my story because it would leave the door open for me to work again should I need more information. I told her I didn't know, that I would call her. "Well, I'll start scheduling you again on Thursday just in case," she said, and gave me my first week's paycheck: $35.90 net for two nights in the Living Room. What about my first night at the hat check stand? "You don't get paid for training," said Sheralee. I protested that it wasn't training. "I'll talk to the bookkeeper," she said, doubtfully.

I sat next to a Bunny I knew slightly and took off my makeup.

Thursday 21st

Nearly a week had passed. I called Sheralee to say that I had just come back to pick up my clothes and that I would have to quit permanently. She pleaded with me to work the Playmate Bar tonight, just one more night, and somehow (might I learn something new?) I found myself saying yes.

Friday 22nd

But it was just the same:

Room Director: "That's your station, four fours and three deuces."

Customer: "If you're my Bunny, can I take you home with me?"

Bartender: "They keep changing the size of the shots, up and down, up and down. It's enough to drive you crazy."

Bunny: "I worked that LoLo Cola private party and they gave me a six-pack. Big deal."

Customer: "I'm in the New Yorker Hotel, Room 625. Can you remember that?"

Man: "If little girls were blades of grass, what would little boys be?" Bunny: "Ummm... lawn mowers?" Man: "No. Grasshoppers!"

Sign in supply room:
"This is your home.
Please don't throw coffee grinds in sink."

Busboy: "The money's coming out of your costume, sweetie."

Bunny: "He's a real gentleman. He treats you just the same whether you've slept with him or not."

Bunny: "Ordering three 7 Crown, two beers and a Playboy Punch."

It was 4 A.M. I went to the Bunny Room and took off my costume. A pretty blonde was putting chairs together to sleep on. She had promised to take another girl's lunch shift after her regular eight hours in the Playmate Bar, and there wasn't time to go home in between. I asked why she did it. "Well," she said, "the money's not too bad. Last week I made $200."

At last I had found a girl who made the promised salary.

I walked into Sheralee's office. Pinned to the bulletin board was a list of cities next in line for Playboy Clubs (Pittsburgh, Boston, Dallas and Washington, D.C.) and a yellow printed sheet titled WHAT IS A BUNNY?

"A Bunny," began the text, "like the Playboy Playmate, is the girl next door. She is... beautiful, desirable, and a nice fun-loving person. ... We'll do everything in our power to help make you—the Bunny—the most envied girl in America, working in the most exciting and glamorous setting in the world."

I turned in my costume for the last time. "So long, honey," said the blonde. "See you in the funnies." □

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